INTRODUCTION
TO THE
BAKERSFIELD DISTRICT
FOR
JIM RUCH
CALIFORNIA STATE DIRECTOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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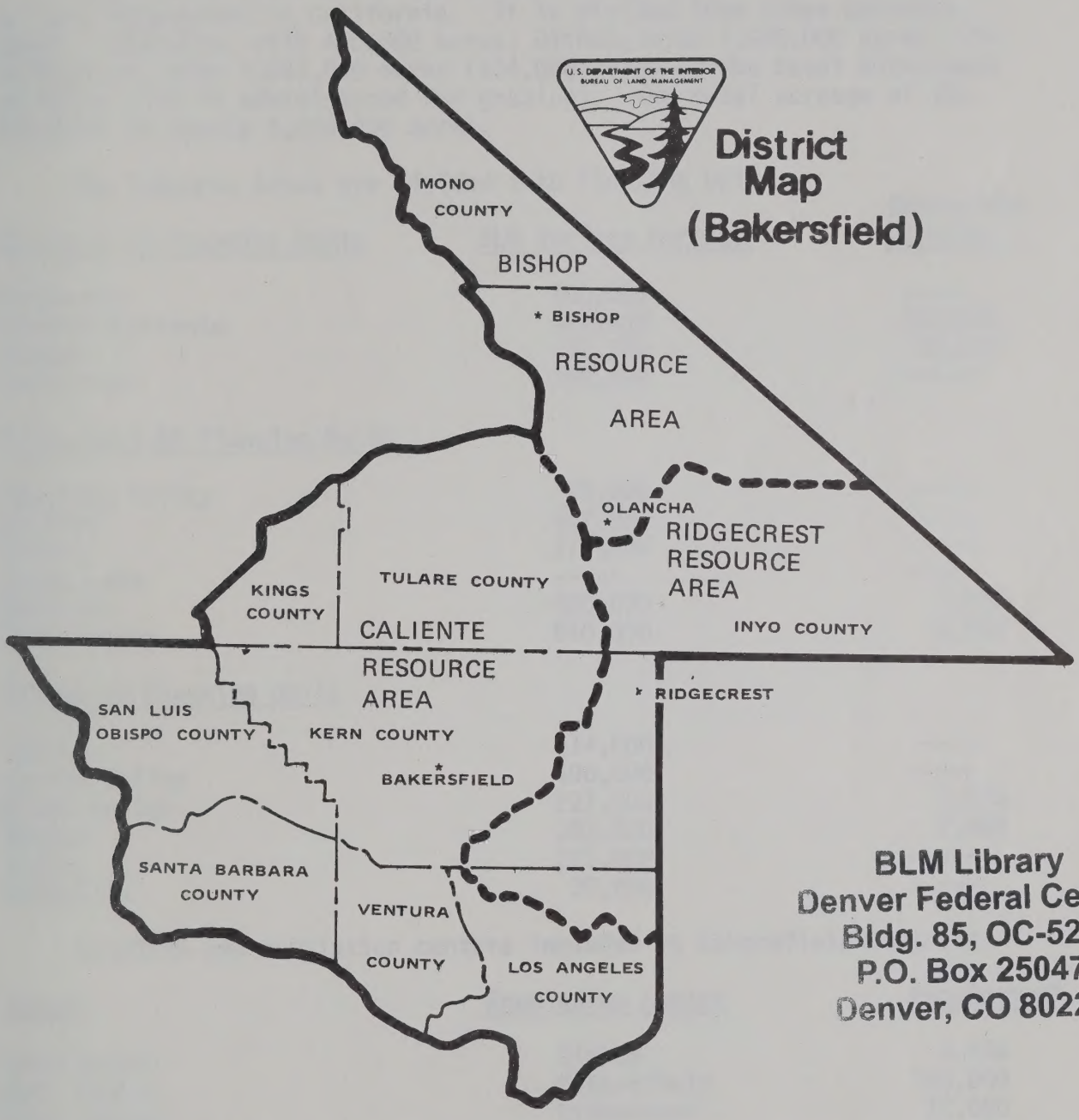
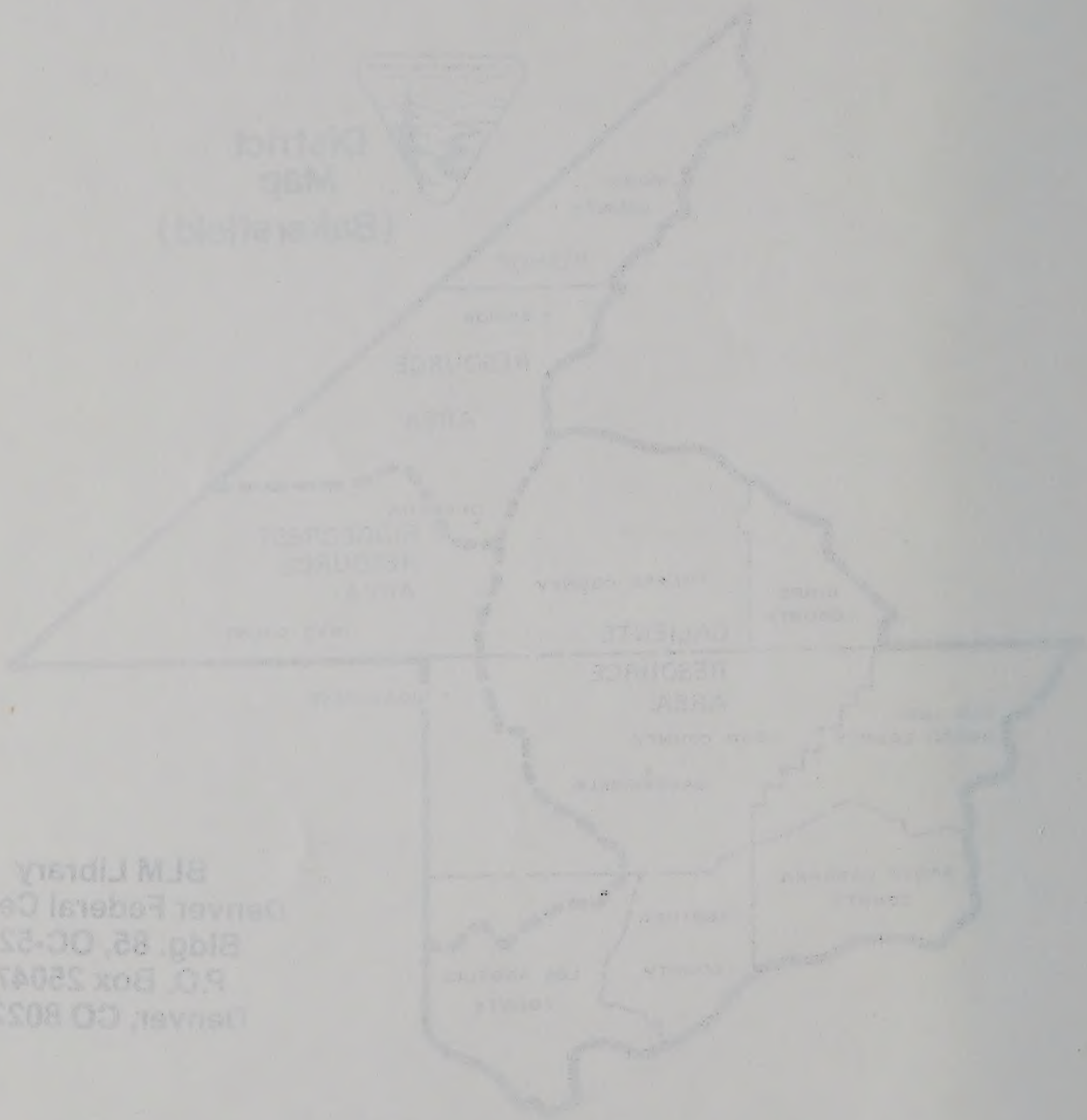
BAKERSFIELD DISTRICT





BAKERSFIELD DISTRICT OVERVIEW

Bakersfield District is the second largest district of the Bureau of Land Management in California. It is divided into three Resource Areas: Caliente, with 460,000 acres; Bishop, with 1,685,000 acres; and Ridgecrest, with 2,043,000 acres (534,000 acres of the Naval Withdrawal at China Lake is administered for grazing). The total acreage of the District is nearly 5,000,000 acres.

The Resource Areas are divided into Planning Units:

Caliente RA Planning Units	BLM Surface Acreage	Subsurface Acreage
Potpourri	100,000	-----
Temblor-Caliente	170,000	101,940
Kaweah	32,000	16,629
Kern River	158,000	-----
Ridgecrest RA Planning Units		
Antelope Valley	29,000	-----
El Paso	452,000	-----
Darwin	272,000	-----
China Lake	-----	-----
Panamint	480,000	1,085
Bitterwater	810,000	2,925
Bishop RA Planning Units		
Saline	414,000	-----
Eureka Valley	490,000	-----
Owens Valley	227,000	3,076
Benton	303,000	2,000
Bodie	221,000	-----
Coleville	30,000	-----

Counties and population centers included in Bakersfield District:

County	Population Center	Population*
Inyo County	Bishop	3,650
Kern County	Bakersfield	150,000
Kern County	Ridgecrest	12,000
Kern County	Delano	15,250
Kings County	Hanford	17,750
Los Angeles Basin		11,000,000
Los Angeles County	Lancaster	40,000
Mono County	Mammoth Lakes	2,240

San Luis Obispo County	San Luis Obispo	32,000
Santa Barbara County	Santa Barbara	150,000
Santa Barbara County	Santa Maria	33,500
Tulare County	Visalia	35,000
Tulare County	Tulare	18,000
Tulare County	Porterville	15,000
Ventura County	Ventura	65,000
Ventura County	Oxnard	85,000
Ventura County	Simi Valley	70,000

*estimated population

BAKERSFIELD DISTRICT RESOURCES

GRAZING LAND

There is a total of 2,743,426 acres in the district licensed or leased for grazing purposes. Caliente RA licenses and leases 473,216 acres of grazing land, Bishop RA licenses and leases 705,383 acres of grazing land, and Ridgecrest RA licenses and leases the largest acreage, 1,564,527 acres of grazing land.

Vegetative types within the District include Mediterranean annual, Desert ephemereal, sagebrush and grass, pinyon-juniper, and high mountain meadow.

WILDLIFE

The Bakersfield District has a rich diversity of wildlife habitat and wildlife species. Some of the habitats are associated with a desert environment, however, there are many less arid habitats in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the California coastal ranges.

Approximately 400 species of animals have been recorded, which include at least 3 species of amphibians, 46 species of reptiles, 200 species of resident birds, 70 species of migratory birds and 89 species of mammals.

Wildlife species of particular interest in the District are:

wild geese and other waterfowl	Wood Duck
upland game birds such as Chukar	Prairie Falcon
Mountain Lion	Mule Deer
Tule Elk	Osprey
Desert Tortoise	Sage Grouse
Sand hill Crane	Sea Gull

Eleven federal and state listed rare or endangered species inhabit public lands in the District, either permanently or on a seasonal basis.

California Condor
San Joaquin Kit Fox
Blunt Nose Leopard Lizard
Tehachapi Slender Salamander
Peregrine Falcon
California Bighorn Sheep
Owens Valley Pupfish
Black Toad
Wolverine
Inyo Slender Salamander
Mojave Ground Squirrel

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Bakersfield District has many archaeological sites of Indian villages, temporary camps and milling stations. There are also petroglyphs, pictographs, rock rings and an intaglio.

Historic places from the early days of the westward movement of settlers and the gold rush add to the cultural resources of the District.

These are some of the more well known historic sites:

White Mountain City
Panamint City
Randsburg
Beveridge
Saline Salt Tram
Twenty Mule Team Borox Road
Bodie
Ballarat
Garlock

GEOLOGY

The Bakersfield District is a region of great topographic and geologic diversity. Included within its limits are high mountain ranges (Sierra Nevada, White and Inyo) and valleys, whose floors lie below or near sea level; precipitous canyons and broad basins at many levels; an assemblage of other features that reflect a complex geologic history; and a wide variety of rock types and structural elements.

Within the exterior boundaries of the District are located the highest (Mt. Whitney) and the lowest (Badwater, Death Valley) elevations in the lower 48 states.

ENERGY RESOURCES

There are abundant energy sources and potentials in the Bakersfield District, in oil and gas, electricity generated by the water in the Kern River, and seven potential geothermal energy areas. Geothermal areas of the District are located at Long Valley, Searles Lake, Tecopa, Coso, Saline Valley, Owens Lake, and a site near Bodie State Park.

MINERAL RESOURCES

A sample of almost every known mineral can be found in Bakersfield District, but the main resources are listed under three groupings.

Leasable

Oil & Gas
Geothermal
Phosphates
Sodium-salt
Potassium
Petroleum products

Saleable

Sand & Gravel
Construction fill
Stone for Construction
(such as fireplaces)

Locateable

Borates (worlds largest supply)
Zinc
Uranium
Tungsten
Gold
Silver
Lead
Industrial Minerals
(such as talc & limestone)

RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

The recreational activities pursued in the Bakersfield District are almost endless.

Boating
Rafting
Swimming
Fishing
Camping
Hiking
Hunting
Back packing
Off-road vehicles
Rock hounding
Bird watching
Sightseeing
Horseback riding
Picnicking
Cross Country skiin
Toboggoning

Points of Interest

Tuttle Creek
Eureka Sand Dunes
Pacific Crest Trail
Tule Elk Wildlife Overlook
Alabama Hills

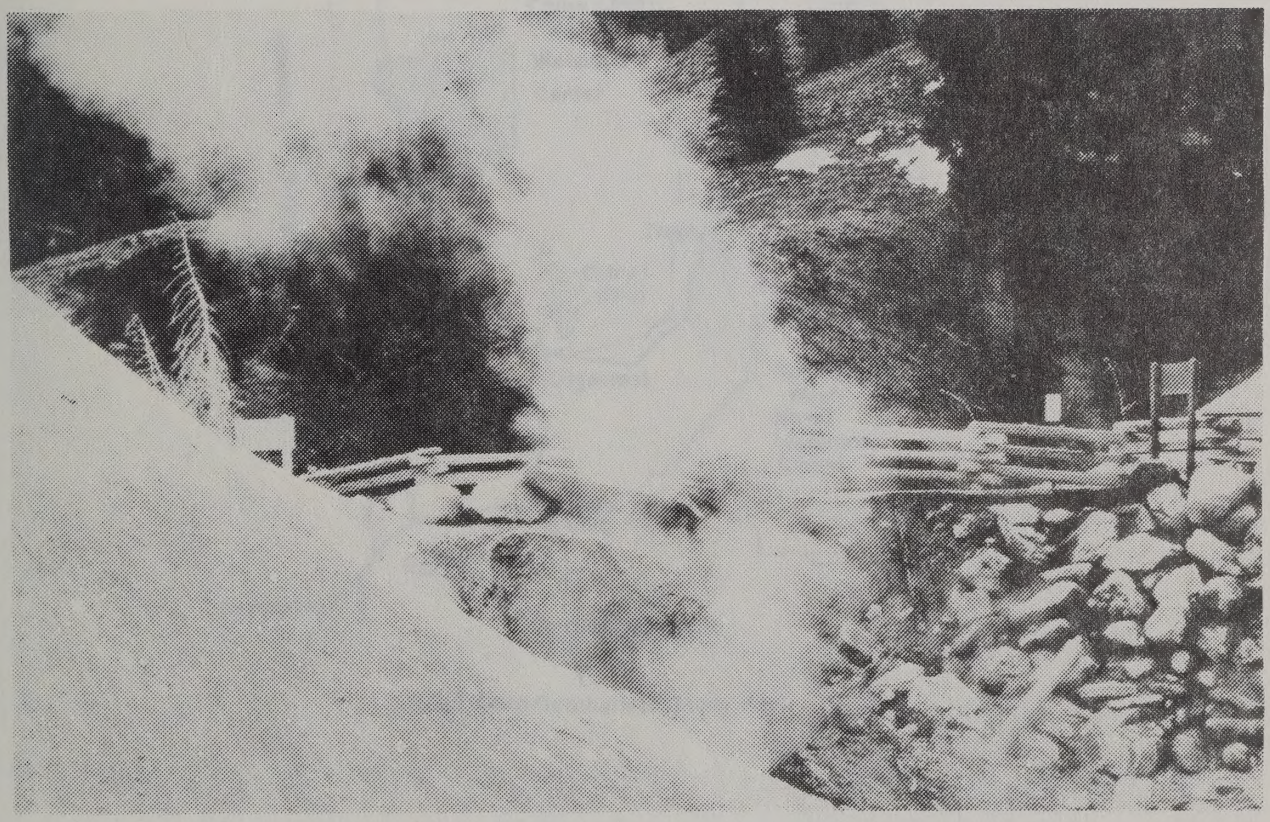
Campgrounds

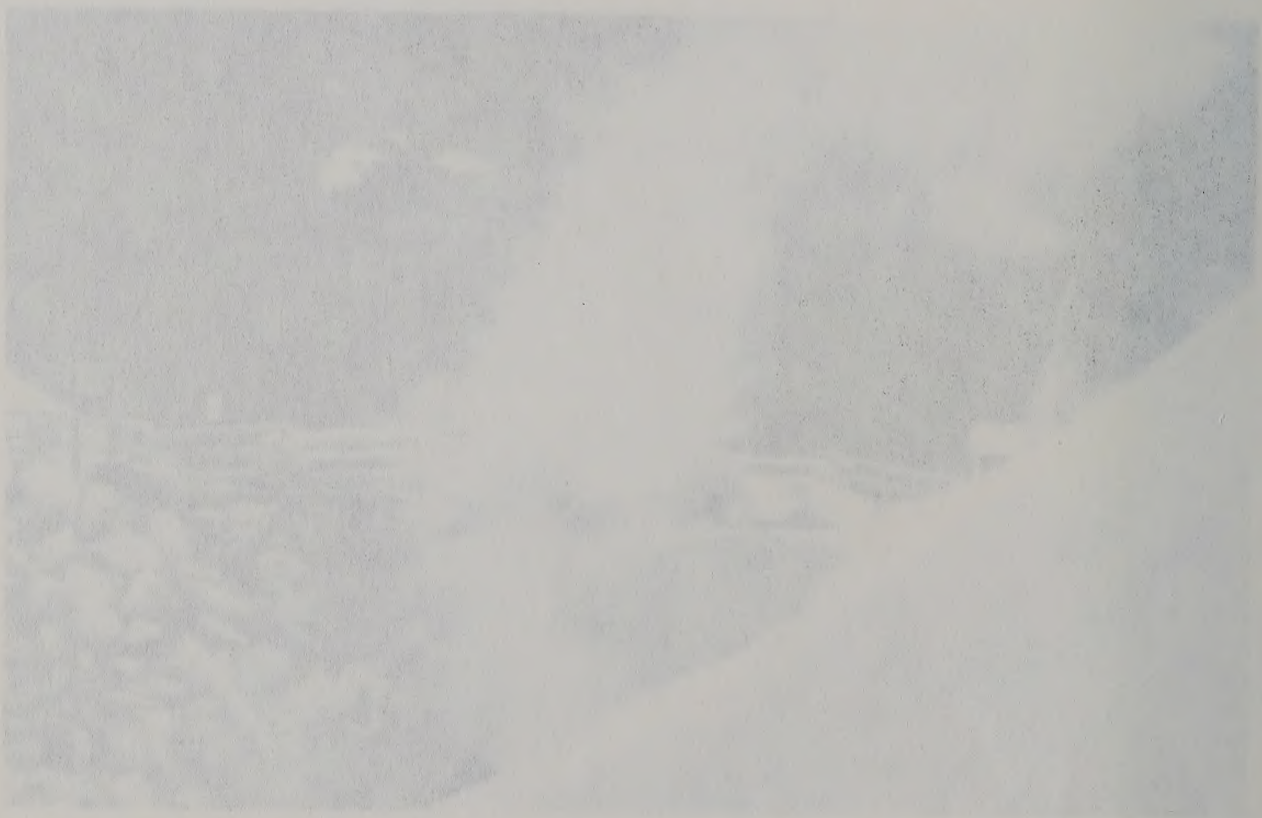
Chimney Creek
Long Valley
Horton Creek
Symnes Creek
Goodale Creek
Crowley Lake

ORV Open Areas

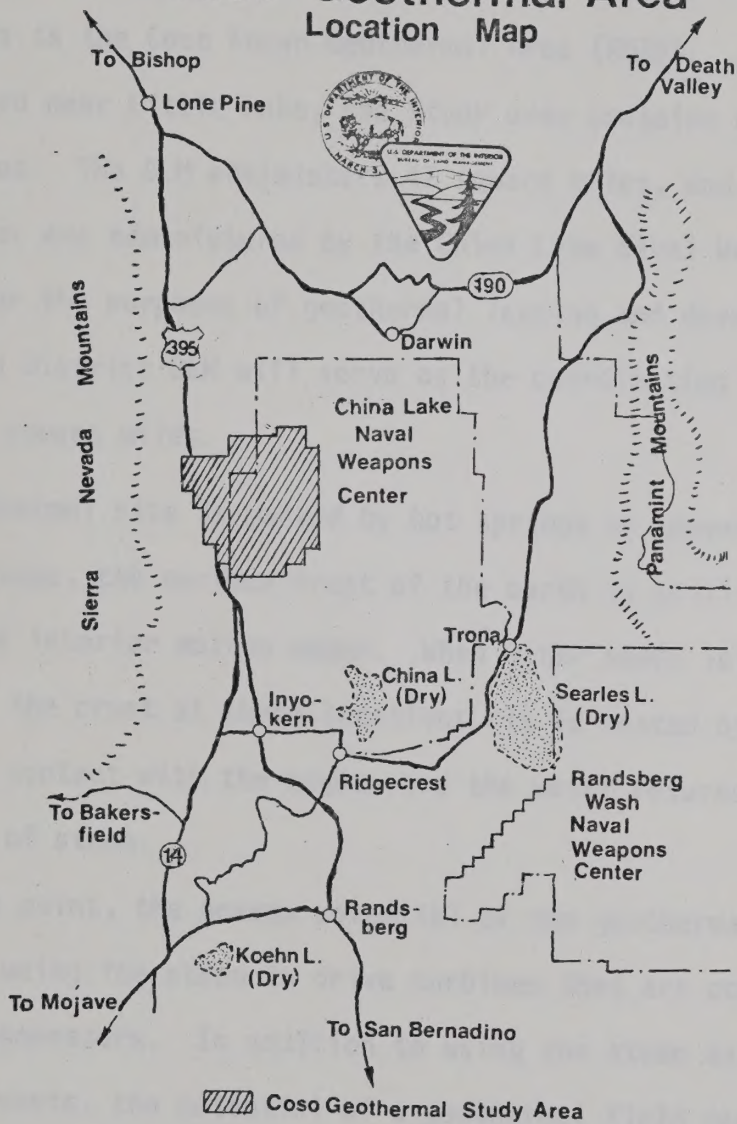
Rand - 35,200 acres
Rademacher - 12,800 acres
Jawbone Canyon - 7,680 acres
Olancha - 32,000 acres
Dove Springs - 2,560 acres

COSO GEOTHERMAL





Coso Geothermal Area
Location Map



COSO GEOTHERMAL

In these days of dwindling oil supplies and rising prices, the United States is beginning to look for alternative sources of energy. One of these alternatives is geothermal energy, and several areas with geothermal potential are located in the Bakersfield District. One of these areas is the Coso Known Geothermal Area (KGRA).

Located near Little Lake, the study area contains approximately 126 square miles. The BLM administers 47 square miles, and the remaining 79 square miles are administered by the China Lake Naval Weapons Center. However, for the purposes of geothermal leasing and development, the Bakersfield District BLM will serve as the coordinating agency for the entire 126 square miles.

A geothermal site is marked by hot springs or geyers of steam. At these locations, the surface crust of the earth is still relatively close to the interior molten magma. When water seeps into cracks and fissures in the crust at these locations, it is heated by the rocks that are in contact with the magma, and the water returns to the surface in the form of steam.

At this point, the energy potential of the geothermal field is realized by using the steam to drive turbines that are connected to electrical generators. In addition to using the steam as it comes from the natural vents, the potential of a geothermal field can be tapped by drilling. The productivity of geothermal fields naturally varies from area to area, depending on quantity and the quality of the steam. The Coso vicinity has an estimated potential of 500-600 megawatts, which is power enough to supply the energy needs of a large metropolitan area.

At The Geysers, a geothermal site in northern California in the Ukiah District, leasing and energy production have been underway for years. At the Coso area, leasing and production will begin pursuant to the completion of an environmental statement (ES), which is presently being prepared by Rockwell International under a contract from the BLM. The draft ES is scheduled to be published by February 1980, and the state director's leasing decision is scheduled for December 1980.

One of the concerns at the Coso site, and one which the environmental statement will address, is the matter of cultural resources. The hot springs have historically been considered sacred ground by the Paiute-Shoshone tribes who once lived in the area, and their descendants today still consider them just as sacred. Present-day Indians still conduct some of their religious rituals there, and the number and variety of petroglyphs and rock drawings found in the vicinity of the springs show that the area had a special significance to prehistoric inhabitants as well.

In January, 1978, 510 acres of the Coso geothermal site were set aside as a National Historcial Place. This measure was designed to project the Native American heritage at the hot springs. It does not preclude the development of geothermal energy but insures that it will be conducted in a way that is compatible with traditional cultural and historical values associated with the hot springs.

An outstanding example of the Sequoias (Sequoiadendron giganteum) located at Case Mountain.

CASE MOUNTAIN

For the last ten years, the Bakersfield District BLM has been interested in acquiring holdings on the summit of Case Mountain in the Caliente Resource Area, near the town of Three Rivers. The 1,180 acres, now mostly under control of the Wickes Lumber Corporation, has groupings of over 100 Sequoia redwoods.

The Sequoias are a remarkable resource. It is a stirring experience to walk through a forest of these giant trees. The trees on this property range from six feet in diameter to as large as 17 feet. There is no exact count of the total number of redwoods on the Wickes property. The big trees are scattered throughout the north and east sides of the peak, with one grouping of 30 to 40 trees. The timber on this property was not included in earlier lumber operations in the area, and so has many "old growth" Sequoias.

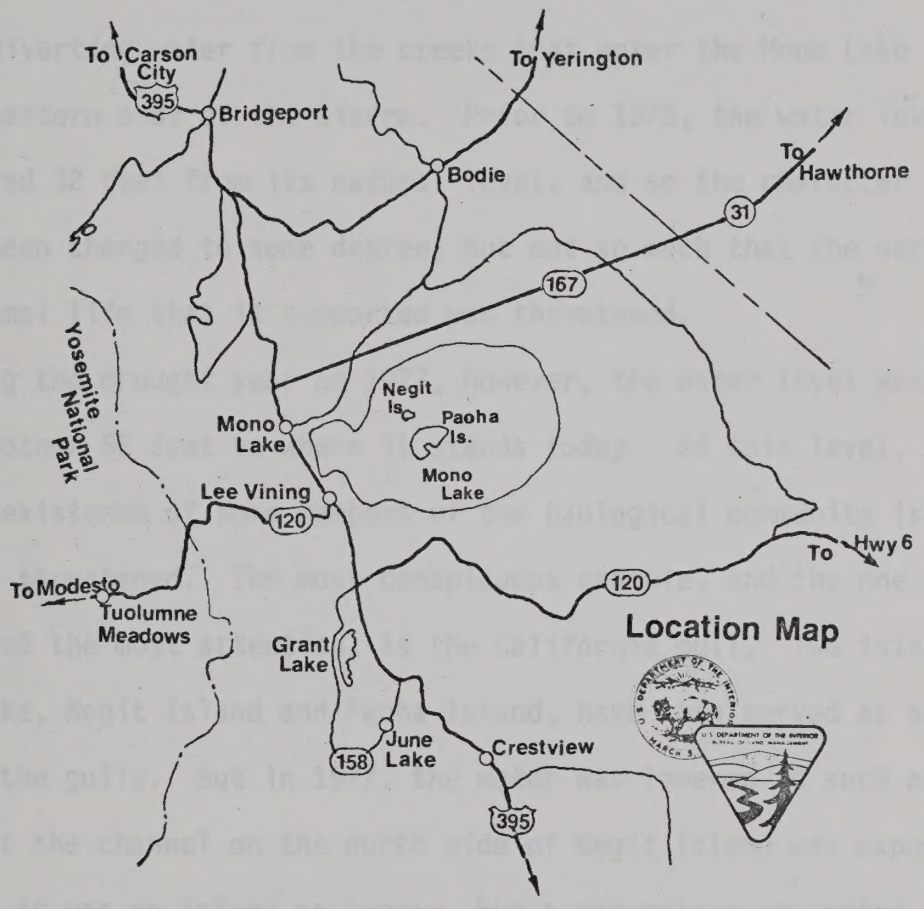
The giant Sequoias on Case Mountain are an outstanding natural resource. They are a key element to the potential recreation value of the adjacent BLM land, which also contains more Sequoias. In fact, this is the only BLM stand of Sequoia redwoods in the nation.

The BLM now owns 480 acres that the San Diego Gas and Electric Company acquired from the Wickes Corporation. In exchange for some public land near Blythe, where they want to build a power-plant, the San Diego Gas and Electric has agreed to transfer title of the 480 acres to the BLM. The Wickes Corporation, however, retained the timber rights on the 480 acres. Sometime in the near future, they will do a selective cutting of the white timber only--no redwoods will be logged.

The Wickes Corporation still owns approximately 800 acres on Case

Mountain, and three other individuals own parcels amounting to approximately 240 acres in all. The BLM hopes eventually to acquire these lands as well. The Case Mountain Sequoias are comparable to the neighboring big-trees in Sequoia National Park, and the BLM plans eventually to develop the site into a Recreation Area. That means that campsites will be developed, and that some facilities will be provided. Even though some of the timber will be cut, the recreational value of the land should remain essentially unimpaired.

Mono Lake Area



MONO LAKE

Mono Lake is a large, land-locked body of water located at the northern end of the Bishop Resource Area. At its naturally occurring water level, the lake would measure approximately ten miles long by fifteen miles wide, but the lake as it stands now is much smaller in area. Ever since 1941, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power has been diverting water from the creeks that enter the Mono Lake basin from the eastern side of the Sierra. Prior to 1976, the water level had been lowered 32 feet from its natural level, and so the character of the lake had been changed to some degree, but not so much that the survival of the animal life that it supported was threatened.

During the drought year of 1977, however, the water level was lowered another 55 feet to where it stands today. At this level, the continued existence of some members of the biological community is definitely threatened. The most conspicuous example, and the one which has received the most attention, is the California gull. Two islands in Mono Lake, Negit Island and Paoha Island, have long served as nesting sites for the gulls. But in 1977, the water was lowered to such an extent that the channel on the north side of Negit Island was exposed. In effect, it was an island no longer, but a promontory connected to the mainland by a narrow land bridge. As a result, the way was opened for predators to cross over to the gull colonies. Soon the gulls were so threatened by the number of predators (coyotes primarily) that were raiding their nests, that people began to realize that the gulls on Negit Island would be destroyed unless something was done to save them.

An Interagency Task Force met in Sacramento to consider the problem.

The lead agency was the BLM, and the other major agencies involved were the California Department of Fish and Game, and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. As an interim measure, they decided to try to deepen the channel by blasting. A California National Guard Demolition Team handled the explosives and did the blasting. They used approximately 12,000 pounds of explosives in units of fifty-pound "jugs." The blasting was tried for two years in a row, in 1978 and 1979 but has proven unsuccessful in solving the problem. The gulls have abandoned Negit Island.

As the water level continues to decline, the water in Mono Lake, which was salty to begin with, is becoming more and more saline. Even at its natural level, the water was many times more salty than the ocean. The organisms that have lived in the lake over the past thousands of years have adapted quite easily to their saline environment. The Mono brine shrimp, Artemia monica, is one of the more important of these organisms. The shrimp population numbers literally in the millions and is one of the principal sources of food for the gulls and other waterfowl that either live at Mono Lake or visit it during their seasonal migrations.

One of the major concerns now is that the salinity of the lake will be increased beyond the ability of the brine shrimp to adapt to it. And if the brine shrimp fail to survive, then surely the birds that depend on it will disappear also. Another secondary concern is that with the lowering of the lake, large flats of the alkaline lake bed are exposed. Not only is it unattractive and sterile, but the alkaline dust is also a very definite threat to the health of people and animals when it is

picked up and carried by the wind.

At present, the fate of Mono Lake and the community of plants, animals, and people that surround it is still undecided. But the BLM and other agencies and groups are working toward solutions that will balance the need for water and hydroelectric power with ecological and environmental concerns.

COMPREHENSIVE

EMPLOYMENT

and

TRAINING ACT

(CETA)

COMPREHENSIVE

EMPLOYMENT

and

TRAINING ACT

(CETA)

CETA

Under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), first enacted in 1973, Congress authorized several federally subsidized employment programs. One of these (authorized under Title VI of the Act) provides for employment in public service jobs during periods of high unemployment. In fact, one of the conditions for employment under Title VI is that a person shall "have been unemployed for at least 10 out of the 12 weeks immediately prior to application."

The Bakersfield District at present employs a total of 46 CETA employees. Eighteen of these people are working on labor crews, eight are working as clerk typists, two are mechanics, and eighteen are working in semi-professional positions, assisting the District's Resource Specialists.

In the Ridgecrest Resource Area, a labor crew is presently building a drift-fence along the western boundary of Red Rock Canyon State Recreation Area. The fence will connect with an existing fence to the north that runs along the highway. The project is designed to reduce the number of automobile accidents that have occurred involving cattle on the highway that runs through Red Rock Canyon.

Under the direction of a CETA archaeologist, the same labor crew has constructed vehicle barriers at several points at the Fossil Falls site. This measure is designed to reduce the unauthorized collecting of archaeological specimens at this unusually rich location.

At the Desert Tortoise Natural Area, CETA Wildlife Technicians have been assisting the Ridgecrest Wildlife Biologists in their study and planning for the management of that area. And a CETA Recreation

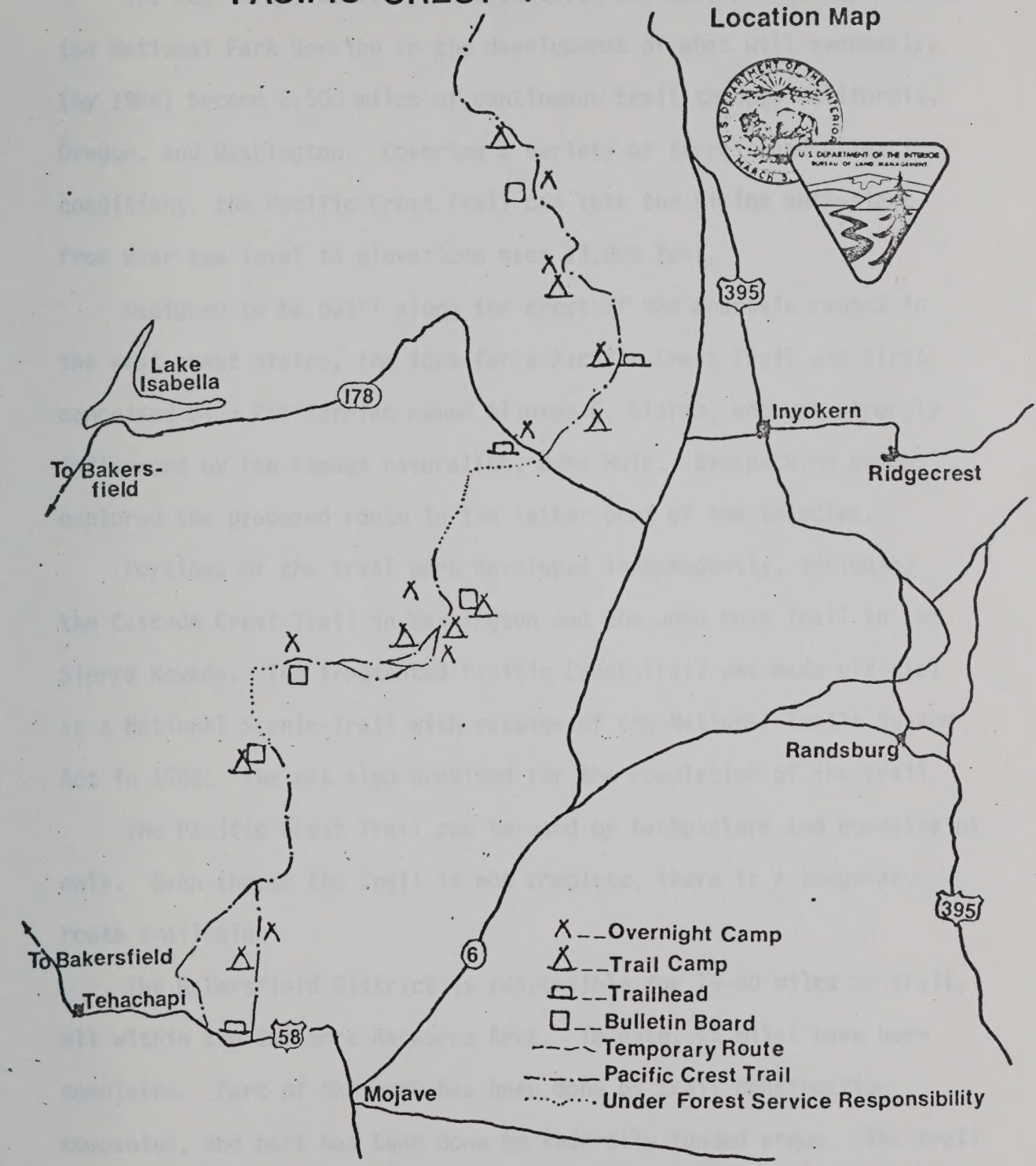
Technician has been assisting the Ridgecrest Outdoor Recreation Planner in checking the ORV travel and the organized races that play such an important part in the recreation in that area.

In the Bakersfield District Office, a labor crew based in Lake Isabella is responsible for helping maintain the District's campgrounds and trails, and they also do cleanups of public land whenever necessary. In the headquarters office, CETA people are serving in almost every capacity possible. In addition to the clerk typists, there is a graphic layout artist, a realty aide, a wildlife aide, a range technician, a radio technician, two historians, a public affairs aide, and a writer-editor. These people are supplemented by a recreation technician and a range aide at the Caliente Resource Area Office.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Bakersfield District and its Resource Areas have been able to complete projects with CETA people that otherwise might have been deferred for years, or perhaps not begun at all. And the best part about it is that it has all been done with very little impact to the District's budget.

But the benefits do not derive to the Bureau alone. Each one of these CETA employees is getting training or experience that will help them find another job when their CETA time is through.

BAKERSFIELD DISTRICT
PACIFIC CREST TRAIL



PACIFIC CREST TRAIL

The BLM is collectively involved with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service in the development of what will eventually (by 1986) become 2,500 miles of continuous trail through California, Oregon, and Washington. Covering a variety of terrain and climatic conditions, the Pacific Crest Trail can take the hiking enthusiast from near sea level to elevations over 13,000 feet.

Designed to be built along the crest of the mountain ranges in the west coast states, the idea for a Pacific Crest Trail was first conceived by a Californian named Clinton C. Clarke, who was strongly influenced by the famous naturalist, John Muir. Backpacking groups explored the proposed route in the latter part of the thirties.

Portions of the trail were developed independently, including the Cascade Crest Trail in Washington and the John Muir Trail in the Sierra Nevada. The fragmented Pacific Crest Trail was made official as a National Scenic Trail with passage of the National Trails System Act in 1968. The act also provided for the completion of the trail.

The Pacific Crest Trail can be used by backpackers and equestrains only. Even though the trail is not complete, there is a temporary route available.

The Bakersfield District is responsible for 75-80 miles of trail, all within the Caliente Resource Area. To date, 45 miles have been completed. Part of the work has been done by trail construction companies, and part has been done by federally funded crews. The trail north of Highway 178 is complete now except for a three-mile segment at Spanish Needles, which will be completed in 1980 or 1981.

South of Highway 178, the trail is completed halfway to Highway 58. The route of the remaining 25-30 miles has been staked and flagged, but construction on this part of the trail will not begin until 1981 or 1982. However, this final section of trail should easily be completed by the 1986 deadline.

Synopsis of District Grazing Advisory Board Meeting - April 19 and 20, 1979 .

NEWSLETTER

BAKERSFIELD DISTRICT GRAZING ADVISORY BOARD — VOLUME I — NUMBER 1. JULY 1979

Editor's Note:

The Bakersfield District Grazing Advisory met for the first time since the passage of their charter by the Secretary of Interior, Cecil D. Andrus, April 19 and 20, 1979. Following are highlights of that meeting for the benefit of all District grazing lessees and permittees:

Louis A. Boll, BLM's Bakersfield District Manager, welcomed the newly elected Grazing Advisory Board to their initial meeting at the Hill House, 700 Truxtun Avenue, with an explanation of the Board's enacting legislation, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). He said that FLPMA could be likened to a "new broom" that swept out some 2,000 antiquated laws, some dating back to the early 1800's that were often conflicting, and replaced them with a clearly defined legislative mandate for the management of public lands in the United States.

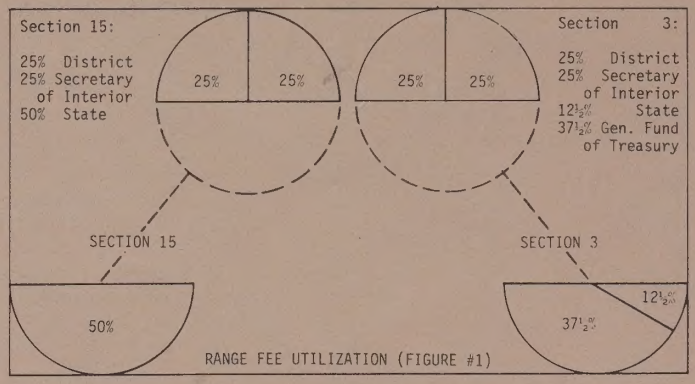
He said that FLPMA specifically addresses the matter of Grazing Boards in Section 403 (a): "...each Bureau district office...in the eleven western states having jurisdiction over more than five hundred thousand acres of lands subject to commercial livestock grazing...upon the petition of a simple majority of the livestock lessees and permittees shall establish and maintain at least one grazing advisory board..." He noted that the Bakersfield District has in excess of 3,000,000 acres of grazing land and therefore is qualified for a board.

Lou Boll also explained the grazing fee dispersal system established by law. He said that 25 percent of the District's grazing fees goes into range management in the area where they originated, and 25 percent goes into range improvement at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior. The latter 25 percent may or may not go back to the area of origin, depending on program priorities for range improvement.

Phil Rudnick, member of the board, asked for clarification on the point of the Secretary's discretionary funds.

Mr. Boll explained that the money could, conceivably, be used within the District if the project priority was high enough and could not be completed with funds already authorized for use in the District of origin.

A lengthy discussion between the board members are Louis A. Boll, Les Monroe (Range Conservationist, Bishop), Glen Harris (Range Conservationist, Ridgecrest) and Ken Volpe (District Range Conservationist), concerning the utilization of grazing fees. Figure No. 1 best followed explains this utilization for Section 3 and 15 lease and permit fees.



RANGE FEE UTILIZATION (FIGURE #1)

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Election of Board Officers was the next agenda item considered. By acclamation Phil Rudnick was elected Chairman and Ray Eyherabide, Vice Chairman. Mr. Boll informed the board that all their administrative costs would be supplied by the District.

On the matter of rechartering the board, it was the concensus that the old charter be submitted to the Secretary of Interior without modification. The board passed on this resolution by acclamation (It should be noted that there was one necessary amendment to the old charter as a result of a directive from the Office of Management and Budget. Instead of .6 person years-Sec. 13, Estimated Operating Costs - the support time was changed to 3/4 person years. There were no other changes.).

Phil Rudnick asked about the reimbursement of travel expenses to board members having to travel great distances to attend meetings. Lou Boll explained that the charter (Paragraph 9) states that members will serve without cost to the Government.

Mr. Rudnick asked for clarification on the matter of $5,000 under paragraph 11 of the Charter.

Mr. Boll said this was an estimate on what it would cost the District to operate the board administratively and logistically.

Mr. Rudnick asked if Paragraph 11 (Charter) provided costs for an Executive Committee for the Board. He felt such a committee would be of value in case the District Manager wanted to informally discuss range matters.

Mr. Boll said that according to FLPMA, whether the whole board meets or just a representative committee, the same expenses and time constraints (time constraints meaning the minimum of thirty days prior Federal Register notice that must be given for meetings) would be in effect.

Fielding another question regarding meeting frequency, Mr. Boll said that the board must meet at least once a year, more often if conditions warrant and there is money programmed to support the additional meetings.

Ed Lynch, Caliente Resource Area Manager started off the line of staff reports to the new board. He explained that his Resource Area covered a total of [illegible] an in depth look at the grazing picture in his area.

Bob Watts said that of the 300,000 acres of land used for grazing, a total of 51,000 animal unit months (AUM) were provided for, and that a total of 4,250 head of cattle use the area year round.

Watts added that there are 81 Sec. 15 leases representing 200,000 acres of public land. In the Kern River area there are 22 Sec. 3 permits, representing some 8,000 AUM's. He said that in addition the Kern River Planning Unit environmental statement (ES) will be started in 1981, with a 1984 completion date targeted.

Responding to a question regarding conflicts with ORV users, Watts said there was no documentation of conflicts. However, allegations have been made that motorcyclists were disturbing the livestock and degrading soil cover by making ruts that could cause erosion. He said that the civil authorities were contacted to see if they could take any remedial action.

Responding to a question from Carver Bowen, Watts said that the average lease size in the Caliente Resource Area was between 28 and 32,000 acres, adding that Sec. 3 lands range between 2,200 and 150,000 acre allotments.

Jim Morrison, Bishop Resource Area Manager, was next on the agenda. He gave the relative description of the Bishop Resource Area and turned the program over to Les Monroe, Range Conservationist, to explain the range program.

Les Monroe said that Bishop had roughly 800,000 acres of grazing land, fulfilling the needs of 53 operators and 55,000 AUM's. He mentioned briefly the conflict between wild horses and burros with domestic livestock and wildlife.

He said that there are approximately 250 range and wildlife projects in the Resource Area, and less than half of them are cooperative agreements.

There are a lot of old fences that were built in the 1920's on public lands in the Bishop Area, as well as numerous cases where pipelines are built next to creeks. Monroe said that BLM does not maintain them and, where possible, they are being removed.

Albert Alexis asked if the removal was being done with the approval of the operators in the area. Monroe said that in most cases their approval is sought, however, not in all instances.

Monroe listed pending projects, some dating back to 1964. He said priorities change, but, one of the paramount priorities in the Area is the fenceline in the Bodie Planning Unit. Roughly 100 miles of fence is down as a result of the heavy snow there two years ago. Boundary fence maintenance is a never ending job.

Albert Alexis asked if there was a reasonable estimate on when the projects would be completed. Monroe said it was a matter of money. Under normal circumstances if a completion date is set for specific projects it invariably is not met due to lack of funds or shift in program priority.

Phil Rudnick said that almost all the permittees in the District have difficulty in getting their projects carried through to completion. He asked the District Manager if the board could offer input on these committments.

Lou Boll said he welcomed input from the board, especially in regard to expenditure of range betterment funds. He said that a major factor in the delay of betterment projects is budgeting. Hopefully, with passage of Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (PL 95-514) money would be provided in the future.

Mr. Boll added that another source of delay was the environmental statements that are required as a result of the NRDC Suit. Until they are completed, nothing can be done that will alter the condition of the range as it now exists. The District has four environmental assessments in the works right now. The last unit to be completed will be in 1984. As each unit is completed new projects can be planned, including range improvements.

Phil Rudnick made a motion, which was seconded, that the District prepare a status report on all pending projects so that the board could have a clear idea of project priorities, estimated completion dates, cost, and available funding. The motion was carried by acclamation.

Carver Bowen asked what happens to money that is funded for projects that are not completed.

Le[illegible] money may switch from one project to another.

Kris Hayes, Ridgecrest Resource Area Manager, was next on the agenda. She spoke briefly on the physical characteristics of her Resource Area and then introduced Range Conservationist Glenn Harris.

Harris said that Ridgecrest had 2,000,000 acres of public land devoted to grazing which is all in the California Desert Conservation Area. One and one fifth million acres have grazing capabilities for 60,000 AUM's. There are 27 Sec. 3 leases, and 5 Sec. 15 permits.

Ray Eyherabide asked about motorcycle trespass on the grazing allotments.

Harris said that ORV use in the Ridgecrest Resource Area is more organized. Competitive events are limited to designated areas called "Open Areas." Outside those areas vehicle use is restricted to existing roads and trails. In some areas vehicle use is restricted to designated roads and trails (meaning some roads have been closed). The Ridgecrest Area does have two Rangers, according to Harris, but, unfortunately, they cannot patrol all areas at once so some amount of trespass is inevitable.

It was noted that Ridgecrest and Bishop both suffer from exploding populations of wild burros that have become a threat to habitat and range. Harris said that the BLM "Adopt-A-Burro" program is aimed at easing that impact. (ED. NOTE: Funds for the Burro Program were cut in June. Resumption of the program is not expected before the new Fiscal Year.)

Phil Rudnick asked if there were any questions or comments from the public.

John Stechman from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, introduced himself. His field is range management. He asked about the communication network between the board members and the constituents they represent.

Phil Rudnick said that a precise (this newsletter) will be distributed to all lessees and permittees within the District. Since this meeting is the first since the Board was chartered there has been no organized means of communications until now.

Lou Boll said that the summary of the meeting plus a summary of recent legislation would be circulated to all constituents via a newsletter.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Lou Boll added that some of the Bakersfield District lies within the California Desert Conservation Area. The planning for it is being done by the Desert Planning Staff, stationed in Riverside. The grazing ES for that area is due in Fiscal Year 1980. He went on to say that when the ES for an area is complete, then the Bureau can begin implementation of the management plan. The range betterment fund can then be used for range improvements to increase livestock production.

Phil Rudnick asked why the process took three years. It seemed like a long time to him.

Lou Boll replied that the inventories need to be based on a complete seasonal cycle. Endangered plants and animals require an intensive type of study that has never before been performed for the areas concerned. The planning process requires a long period (several months) of public input and review. The enviromental statements can be completed at the District level within three to six months, but they are subject to review and correction by the State Office, the Washington Office, and Secretary of Interior.

Phil Rudnick asked if the Bureau was getting all the cooperation it needed from the livestock permittees in regard to this planning process.

Les Monroe replied in the positive. He said that he has been working very closely with the permittees in his area. The responses he has been receiving by telephone and mail will be incorporated into the planning process.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
800 Truxtun Avenue, Room 311
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U.S.MAIL

John Mooneyham, planner for the District, gave a summary of the schedule for environmental statements. The first one due is for the Benton-Owens Valley area, which will be completed in Fiscal Year 1980, i.e., September 30, 1980. The next one due is for the Bodie-Coleville area, which will be completed in Fiscal Year 1981.

On December 30, 1974, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia found (in Natural Resources Defence Council (NRDC), et al. v. Rogers C. B. Morton, et al.) that the Bureau was in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act by failing to prepare environmental statements for livestock grazing decisions for specific areas of the public lands it administers. Consequently, BLM was eventually required by an amended court order in 1978, to prepare 145 individual environmental statements by 1988, covering all lands grazed by domestic livestock (170 million acres). BLM's rangelands management program is driven by the Bureau's responsibility for good stewardship of the land, for restoring productivity and maintaining it, and for providing for the best combination of uses over time. The planning and management requirements of FLPMA and PRIA and the environmental statement schedule determined by the Federal courts are the principal forces guiding the program.

The Kern River area will be due in Fiscal Year 1983, and coastal area will be due in Fiscal Year 1981. The present planning process of the Bureau is a three-year procedure. The first year is spent in an inventory of resources. The second year is spent in developing a management framework plan, and the third year is spent in writing an environmental statement for grazing use. The planning is being done in response to a lawsuit brought against the Bureau in 1974 by the National Resources Defense Council.

Ken Volpe, District Range Conservationist gave a summary explanation of recent legislation relating to grazing at the meeting of the Grazing Board:

"In response to FLPMA, the Bureau revised its regulations concerning grazing. These went into effect August 4, 1978. One of the changes is that the Bureau is now required to offer 10 year permits to livestock operators. Another change is a $10 service charge for all crossing permits, transfers of grazing privileges, and revised or supplemental bills. Operators should plan ahead for the season. Another change for this year is an increase in the grazing fee to $1.89 per AUM. He said the fee will probably continue to rise as it is based on such factors as the rates charged for private pasture and the market price for livestock. As these costs increase, the grazing fee will increase also. However, it may not be raised more than 25% of the fee for the previous year. The fee for this year was actually calculated to be a little bit over $2, but that was too great a percentage increase over the previous year's fee.

The range betterment fund is intended primarily for range improvements. That includes the planning, materials, and supervision necessary to complete a project. It may also be used for fish and wildlife habitat improvement and watershed protection as well, in accordance with section 401 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

Further direction for the improvement of the public range lands was provided by the Public Range Lands Improvement Act of 1978. This act not only provided additional guidance for more intensive management of the range resource, it authorized the appropriation of additional funds to be used specifically for range improvement work.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

During the course of the Grazing Advisory Board meeting, Charles C. Tulloss, Assistant District Manager, gave a report on the wilderness review of public lands within the California Desert (Tulloss was Wilderness Coordinator during the process on the desert). He said the wilderness inventory of the desert is now complete. Some 5,500,000 acres of public land (45%) there are being intensively studied for wilderness characteristics. According to Tulloss, BLM will recommend some, all or noe to be official wilderness areas. The final devision is up to the Congress. Until that determination is made nothing can be done in these areas to impair the wilderness characteristics. During the interim period, grazing may continue in the same manner and degree as was customary in September, 1976, when the Federal Land Policy and Management Act was passed, provided that the wilderness characteristics of the area are not degraded. Once Congress declares and area to be wilderness, grazing may not necessarily be excluded completely...thought it may be limited to some extent.

Albert Alexis commented that some of the areas recommended for wilderness had less than 5,000 acres.

Mr. Tulloss replied that they were next to areas that the Forest Service had recommended for wilderness study, hence, the public lands became, in essence, part and parcel of those areas.

Tim Salt, Recreation Planner for the District, spoke on the wilderness program outside the California Desert Conservation Area. Within the Bakersfield District the preliminary inventory

shows that approximately 45% does not have wilderness characteristics. These areas have been identified so they can be returned to multiple use without being tied up in the wilderness review process. As the rest of the lands are looked at more closely, some of them may be designated as non-wilderness areas too. This part of the inventory is due to be finished in November, 1979.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

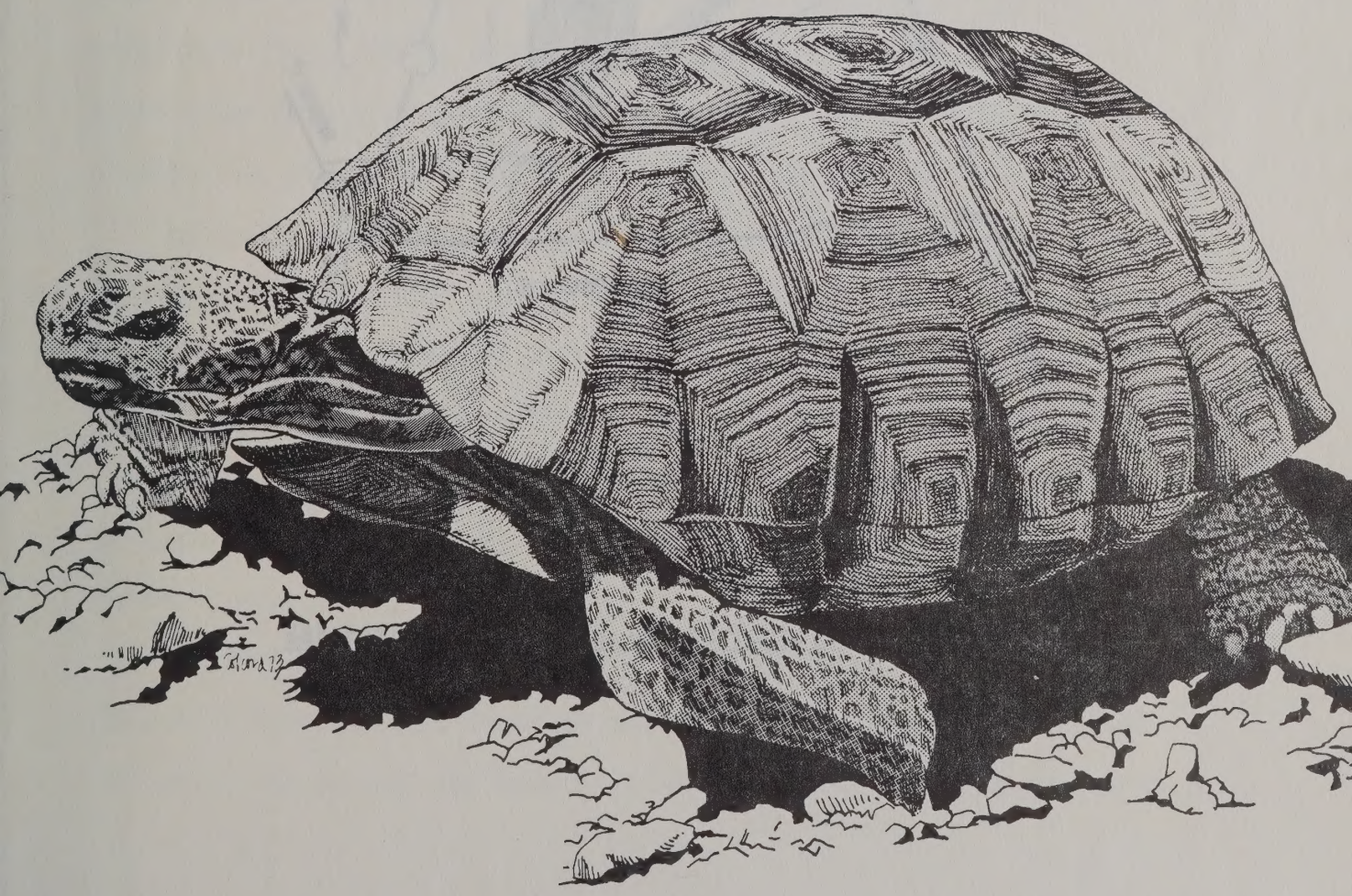
Last on the agenda was the selection of date and site of the next Grazing Advisory Board meeting. It was decided by all concerned that Bishop would be a logical place and the date should be September 14, 1979.

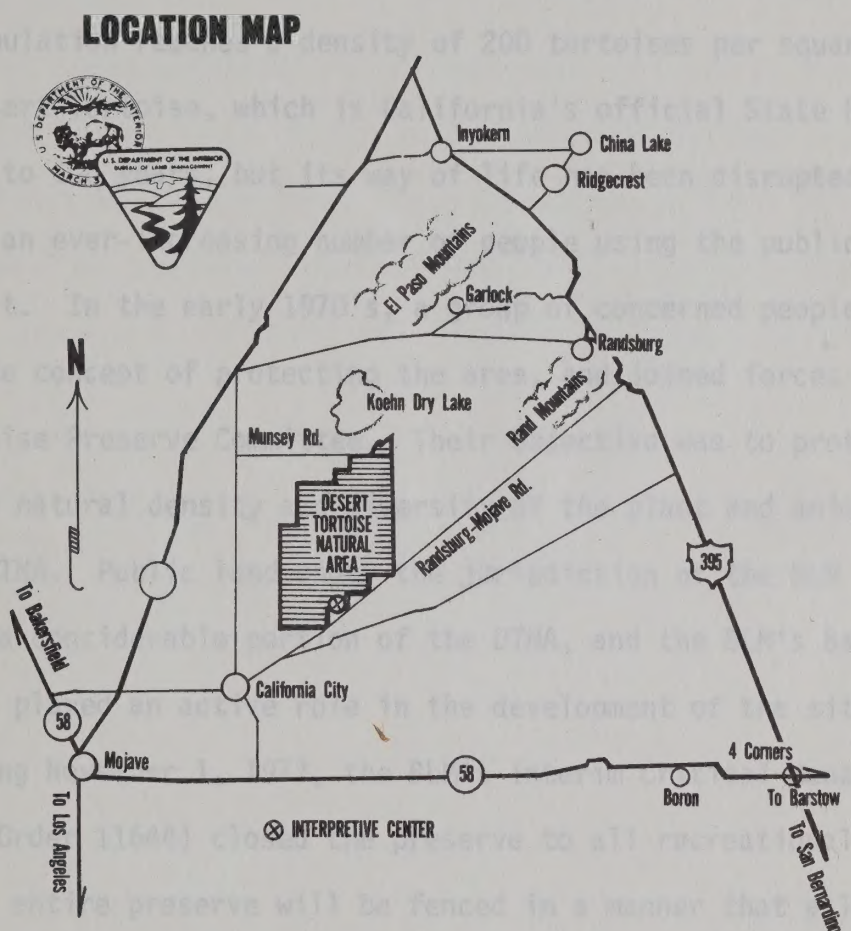
The District Public Affairs Office made arrangements for the meeting to take place at the Bishop City council Chambers, 377 W. Line St., Bishop. The public is welcome to attend the meeting starting at 9:00 A.M., September 14, 1979.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

At present, most of the range improvement funds are being given to the Districts which have completed their grazing environmental statements. Since we have no completed ES's, our range improvement work is restricted primarily to maintenance of existing projects. Our first ES to be completed will be for the Benton/Owens Valley area, and most of our range improvement money will be directed there. As other areas are completed, funds will be made available to them."

DESERT TORTOISE NATURAL AREA





Bakersfield District's Desert Tortoise Natural Area

DESERT TORTOISE NATURAL AREA

The Desert Tortoise Natural Area (DTNA) is located in the western Rand Mountains of the northwest Mojave Desert. The area has the highest known density of Desert Tortoises in the world, having the perfect environment for their survival. In some parts of the DTNA, the tortoise population reaches a density of 200 tortoises per square mile.

The Desert Tortoise, which is California's official State Reptile, can live 60 to 100 years, but its way of life has been disrupted by the presence of an ever-increasing number of people using the public land in the desert. In the early 1970's, a group of concerned people initiated the concept of protecting the area, and joined forces as the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee. Their objective was to protect and maintain the natural density and diversity of the plant and animal life within the DTNA. Public land under the jurisdiction of the BLM constitutes a considerable portion of the DTNA, and the BLM's Bakersfield District has played an active role in the development of the site.

Beginning November 1, 1973, the BLM's Interim Critical Management Plan (Exec. Order 11644) closed the preserve to all recreational vehicle travel. The entire preserve will be fenced in a manner that allows the natural movement of desert wildlife, while restricting vehicles and livestock. A major portion of this fence (30 miles) has been constructed, but gaps still remain where an easement must be obtained to cross private property.

The DTNA consists of 24,000 acres, or approximately 38 square miles. The public land there is interspersed with numerous small private land holdings. The BLM and the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee are making

a continuous effort to acquire these private lands. The Nature Conservancy has recently purchased 1280 acres from the Southern Pacific Railroad, and the San Diego Gas and Electric Company has recently purchased 1580 acres of private land that it has agreed to transfer to the BLM in exchange for permission to build a powerplant on public land in Riverside County.

Plans have been completed for an interpretive kiosk at the DTNA, and two short, self-guiding trails, one of which is designed for people who are confined to wheelchairs. The construction of these interpretive facilities will be completed sometime next year. Hopefully they will help people appreciate the plant and animal ecology found in this part of the desert.

Promotional Material For District "Adopt-A-Burro" Program

SPECIAL EDITION

BURRO

DEPT. of INTERIOR • BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
800 Truxtun Avenue, Room 311 • Bakersfield, California 93301

History Of The Burro

Historically, men have tamed the horse for war and the hunt, and generally speaking, have tamed the burro for peaceful purposes. Burros have brought wood to the fires, raised water from the wells, toiled in the fields, carried the great and the poor, followed the conquistadors to the New World, and packed for prospectors and miners. Many historians say that civilization would never have reached its present stage without the services of this intelligent, patient, strong-backed and wily little animal.

The burro was first domesticated by the desert dwellers in Egypt and Libya around 3,000 B.C. For a period of 4,000 years the use of the animals was largely confined to the Mediterranean region. They were captured and tamed from the wild ass herds of Africa.

It is not clearly established when the first burros were introduced to the European continent, but Spain and Portugal were the home of the burro during the Roman times. When the Moors invaded, they brought more burros from Africa.

The forerunners of the present herds in the Western United States were first brought to this continent in the 1540's by the Spanish explorer, Ponce De Leon in his search for the fountain of youth. They landed on the East Coast, but their search brought them as far west as Texas. The famed Spaniard was unsuccessful in his search for the fount of eternity, but in his travels he left some of these hardy pack animals behind.

Then in the 1700's Jesuit priests brought the word of Christianity into the Western United States, with the dependable burro as their transportation.

In the Mid-1800's swarms of prospectors combed the hills of the west looking for golden riches. They brought burros to carry their tools and supplies. When the gold rush slowed to a near halt, prospectors lost or turned loose thousands of burros into the hills. It was not until this time that burros could be found in the wild in any significant quanity.

Before the end of the 1800's burros were valuable property to miners, prospectors, sheepherders, and many other travelers. They were dependent upon the burros for pack animals, because the animals were able to haul heavy loads for long distances, were surefooted and could survive on the scanty desert vegetation.

After the gold mining boom, with the advent of better roads for easier travel, many burros were turned out onto open range, no longer needed as beasts of burden. They were turned loose or escaped in different areas, which explains today's burro population being found in such large numbers over wide areas. The abandoned animals adapted very easily to the desert terrain in California, being similar to that of their native African habitat. They multiplied, rapidly, forming the herds that are over-crowding our desert areas today.

Adopt-A-Burro Program In 1979

Up to April, 1979, the burro program has been slowed down by weather problems. The rains left water holes all over the terrain, so that burros were not inclined to wander into the waterholes used for trapping. The burros that we have captured have had their potential adopters cancel pickup appointments time after time due to inclement weather. There were few people to brave the snowed-in roads and bad weather to keep a date with their burro. The old adage "neither rain snow, sleet, etc. etc." may be true for postmen, but not for the adopters, who many times have to travel great distances to get their new family addition. The next few months will see a decided change in the pace of the program. The weather is already starting to swelter in the burros' desert home and the myriad of water puddles are drying up.

Soon, the burros will once again be dependent on the summer waterholes. Then the traps will be filling and the holding corrals in Bishop will be busy again.

Since October, 1978, there have been 99 burros captured; 64 of these were adopted to 38 different people, and one burro died at the corral from illness. Thirty-four burros are awaiting adopters at the holding facility, as of April 15, 1979. There had been an average of four in inquires by potential adopters per week, the majority of whom return a completed application for horses or burros.

The Bureau of Land Management's Washington Office has published a booklet on the care of wild horses and burros called, "Getting Acquainted." It was printed to help new adopters who have little or no experience to cope with the care and training of their animals. Copies are available to new adopters, when they pick up their burros at the holding corral.

This adoption program has provided an opportunity for many people who have a little acreage to care for a burro and people who normally might shy at the expense of purchasing a horse or pony for a pet for their children or themselves. Burros are certainly more sociable and friendly than most children's ponies.

The adopters range from people trying their hand at taming and training for the first time, to "old hands" using them for breeding and work animals. They all seem to share the same pleasure in the opportunity to possess one or more of these animals. Although at times the choice of animals is pretty narrow, everyone seems to find a burro to care for.

About Burros

The feral (not native) burros come in many colors: reds, roans, browns, blacks, and all shades of gray. Many have the dark colored cross on their shoulders, from their ancestors, the Nubian wild ass of the African Desert. Some have darker stripes on their upper legs, a marking attributed to the Somali Ass, also from Africa. Burros with more unusual markings, or animals that are rare, such as the white burros seen on occasion, are usually left on the range.

Burros have more affinity for humans than any other members of the horse family. The idea that they are stubborn is a myth; they are actually docile, patient and easily trained. Although they are curious animals, they will not approach something that they are unsure of, possibly giving rise to the myth that they are stubborn. They are highly intelligent and when shown that something is harmless, they quickly lose their fear of it. Burros are very sociable and if treated kindly, will soon develo an affection and loyalty of their adopter.

he photograph was taken of burros in the Saline Valley located east of the Inyo Mountains, Inyo county.

Burro Reduction Program

is obvious to both burro lovers and those terested in the protection of the desert vironment, that something had to be done to eck increasing burro populations in the desert. nyone driving through desert areas can equently see these wild burros in the distance.

the burro herds continue to grow at their esent rate, it can very well end with the arvation of large numbers of the burros. They e eating themselves and other wildlife "out of use and home."

BLM, along with the Forest Service, have inventoried burro herds and the subsequent management plan called for a program of burro reduction. A part of this plan for reduction is the Adopt-A-Burro Program; to find homes for the animals once they are taken from the desert.

The Burro Program was started in 1977, with the adoption center located in the Bishop Resource Area Office. The Mt. Whitney Forest Service District has cooperated with the BLM,

urros have been able to survive and multiply cause of their ability to adapt to the forage ailable. They will eat just about anything. th the increased numbers, they are cropping e shrubs and forage plants back so badly, at it will take many years for the ecosystem recover. Their trails cover the hills, in some eas crisscrossing every few feet. Where burro pulation is dense, foot prints are so thick, u cannot walk on unmarked ground! The osion from their trails is causing as much mage to the environment as their overgrazing. aterholes have become muddy and foul, aking coexistance with wild animals such as e shy Bighorn Sheep very difficult, if not possible!

providing space for the burros at their corral facilities in Bishop. In 1977 and 1978, the herds in Saline Valley were reduced by the removal of one hundred and sixty-eight animals which were subsequently adopted. Burros taken out of the Saline Valley range on both Public Lands and Mt. Whitney District of the Inyo National Forest lands.

In May of 1978, the program ran out of funding until the beginning of the new fiscal year in October 1978. The Burro Reduction Program for Fiscal 1979 calls for removal of about 350 burros from Public Lands in the Bakersfield District. Although trapping is slow during winter months, 100 burros have been captured already in the first five months, and two-thirds of these animals have already been adopted.

This water trap located at the Onyx Mine in Panamint Valley is fed by spring water stored in the tank at left.

BLM wranglers Howard Bias and Bob Anderson on horseback hold a burro immobile while wrangler John Peek helps Dr. Lind with the blood test and examination.

Water Entrapment

Trapping the burros at the waterholes is a simple, safe way to capture wild burros. A watering trough is set up, or the natural waterhole is used at the site of a good year-round spring. Usually it is situated in an area where there is little other water. A portable corral is installed around the trough or hole and left there until the burros become used to the smell of the "trap." The burros enter the corral that is equipped with a trigger wire to shut the gate when a number of burros gather to drink.

BLM wranglers check the traps daily to insure that the animals are not left there for long periods of time. They load the captured burros into a stock trailer and transport them to a holding corral in Olancha, California. At the end of the week they are transported to the corral facilities in Bishop.

The wranglers have also been "trailing" the burros toward the trapping area. Burros are

Continued on next page

Getting Ready For Adoption

The wranglers transport the captured burros to the adoption center corrals where they will be processed prior to adoption. Each burro is given a blood test, called a Coggins test which is required for interstate transport of the animals. The veterinarian also checks their teeth to determine their age and gives them a general checkup for any health problems they may have. Each animal is given a freeze mark for permanent identification. The branding "Iron" is immersed in liquid nitrogen which lowers the temperature so that when it is placed against the animal, it affects the follicles, turning the hair white. Freeze branding is painless and harmless. The brand, placed on the animal's neck on the right side, is a series of lines that identify the state, BLM District, permanent identification number, sex, and whether the

Continued on next page

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WATER ENTRAPMENT

almost impossible to herd, but trailing has been somewhat successful. The wranglers just stay on the trail of the burros at a considerable distance. This way, the burros are just "influenced" to do their wandering in the direction of the trap.

There are two traps in Saline Valley, over the Inyo Mountains from Lone Pine. One that is temporarily inactive at Waucoba Springs, and another located more to the south at Willow Creek down in the Saline Valley "flat." Burros from the Argus Mountain foothills, north of Trona, are being captured at the trap set up near the Onyx mine, and over the hill from where the Slate Range joins the Argus Mountains, at Water Canyon. The fifth trap is set up between Saline and Panamint Valleys, at Lee Flat, North of Darwin Plateau. These traps will be moved from time to time to follow the burro movements as they become denser or thinner in different areas.

Continued from previous page

GETTING READY FOR ADOPTION

animal is a horse or burro. A "dog tag" is hung around the animal's neck for temporary identification while in the corral, and the burros are ready for adoption.

If you are interested in obtaining information on adoption, please write or call:

Bureau Of Land Management
800 Truxtun Avenue, Room 311
Bakersfield, California 93301

Phone: (805) 861-4191

Office hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. weekdays

Adopt-A-Burro

By Bill Bender

IF YOU'D LIKE SOMETHING EXCITING TO DO
TRY SHARING YOUR LIFE WITH A BURRO OR TWO.
WE'VE SEEN THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL
AND IT DON'T AGREE WITH OUR PROTOCOL.

MAN HAS A WAY WITH HIS GREAT IDEAS
TO SORTA FORGET HOW THE OTHER SIDE FEELS.
HE SILENCED THE WING OF THE PASSENGER PIGEON.
SUPPRESSED THE RED MAN AND HIS RELIGION.

POLLUTED THE WATER AND ALSO THE AIR,
SPENT NATURES' TREASURE WITH NARY A CARE.
IF HE CAN'T HAVE IT, HE'LL TAKE IT BY FORCE
WHY HE NEARLY DONE IN MY COUSIN THE HORSE.

THO WE LIVE IN A DESOLATED LAND
OF CACTUS AND LIZARDS AND HOT BURNING SAND.
LITTLE TO DRINK AND A DIET OF STUBBLE,
WE'RE STILL AWARE OF BIG, BIG TROUBLE.

THEY'RE COMING IN TRUCKS, AIRPLANES TOO.
THEY WANT US FOR DOG FOOD . . . OR PUPPY STEW.
WE DON'T WANTA LIVE WHERE NO ANTELOPE PLAY,
WE'D RATHER BE LOVED, NOT PART OF DOOMSDAY.

SO OPEN YOUR HEART AND ALSO YOUR GATE
ADOPT A BURRO BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.
WE HEAR PROGRESS KNOCKING, WE WATCH GOGGLE-EYED,
TIMES RUNNING OUT WITH NO PLACE TO HIDE.

WE WANTA BE UNDER THE CHRISTMAS TREE,
CONSIDERED BY ALL AS YOUR FAMILY.
AND WE'LL SURE SERENADE YOU IF YOU DO
EVERY MORNING AT SUN-UP, THE WHOLE YEAR THRU.

"After being involved with the Adopt-A-Burro Program for almost a year, I decided that I could provide a good home for one of the wild burros the BLM's wranglers trap in the California Desert.

Shortly after I received my letter of approval, I was at the holding facilities in Bishop, California, photographing the freeze-branding process as part of my work for BLM's Bakersfield District Public Information Office when the small, brown jack with a flop ear caught my attention. When I returned home, we held a family council and decided to take him into our household. The children named him Nestor after a flop-eared donkey in a television special shown last Christmas.

I had had some experience with horses, though they were not wild or unbroken. I was very careful from the first that Nestor had no chance to nip or kick me as I worked with him, but he has never tried to hurt me in any way.

When Nestor first arrived, he would have nothing to do with my overtures of friendship. After several days he seemed to realize that I would not hurt him and gradually began to let me touch him when I brought his hay.

He has since learned to enjoy being brushed and seems to look forward to my visits to the corral. I intend to eventually train him to pull a cart for my children, but in the meantime, he does very well as official "Weed Abatement Specialist."

Having Nestor has made my involvement in the burro program more personal. Most of the animals adopted from our district are taken home to be pets, and I have received calls from people wanting to let me know that the burros are adjusting well. I understand their enthusiasm, for in the time that I have had my jack, I have become very attached to him, and I get a lot of pleasure from the time I spend working with him.

From my experience with Nestor, I heartily recommend taking a burro into your home. They are affectionate and intelligent companions, rivaling the "man's-best-friend" role of the canine. They certainly have a better disposition for children than a pony, and can also double as a weed-eater or pack animal. Make a friend . . . adopt a burro."

-- -- Marie Krauter.
Bakersfield District, Burro Adoption Clerk.

Mrs. Riley gives her jack, Yuma, special treats over the fence at her Atascadero home.

Chris & Her Jack

Chris Riley lives in Atascadero, California, a small town in the coastal foothills seventeen miles from Morro Bay. Her house is one of many nestled in the hills amid the area's lush oaks and shrubs. It is also the home of two burros that once roamed the California Desert. Mrs. Riley acquired them by adoption from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Mrs. Riley first heard of BLM's Adopt-A-Burro program from her aunt in Arizona. After she had decided to adopt one of the animals, she heard a public service announcement on a local radio station which gave information on how and where to apply.

In early 1978, she sent her application for a young jenny to the BLM. The jennies were scarce and because of the great demand for them, she faced quite a delay before there would be any available. She decided to change her request to a jack. In April, she picked up a three-year-old jack from the adoption facilities in Bishop, California. When she took him home, he was a skinny shadow of the handsome animal in her corral today. Mrs. Riley named her jack "Yuma" after the town in Arizona, which she describes as "just as scrawny-looking as her burro was."

At the time, Chris Riley was living in Paso Robles where she and a partner had a dog grooming business. She put the jack in a small corral there until he was tame enough to stand still when she approached him. Then "Yuma" graduated to the old weed-filled, fenced garden outside her office. Here, she would talk to him through the window while she worked.

Mrs. Riley had had no experience with horses or burros before Yuma, but her patience and affection has more than made up for it. She became so attached to her "kid," as she refers to her jack, that in January of this year she adopted a jenny to keep him company. "Sarah," her new addition, has settled quickly into her new home, following Yuma's example of friendliness.

Chris Riley is only one of many who have found pleasure in caring for wild burros. Her success in taming Yuma may dispel many people's impression that a full-sized jack can only be handled by "old hands," experienced in handling livestock.

History Of Wild Burro Legislation

HISTORY OF WILD BURRO LEGISLATION

1939 The California Legislature outlawed the slaughter of burros for pet food manufacture.

1957 California Legislature prohibited killing burros for any purpose and limited their capture to a "permit only" basis.

FEDERAL LEGISLATURE

1959 (Public Law 86-234) Declared it illegal to use aircraft or motorized vehicles to capture or kill wild horses or burros. (later reversed by FLPMA).

1971 (Public Law 92-195) WILD FREE ROAMING HORSE AND BURRO ACT provided that wild horses and burros roaming on National Resource Land will be under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management (Sec. of Interior) and the Forest Service (Sec. of Agriculture), for protection, management and control.

It also provided penalties for harrassing, capturing, killing, or selling wild horses and burros and prohibits processing the animals into any commercial products.

This act also provided for establishment of an advisory board to make recommendations on management and protection. The board held meetings through the fall of 1975.

1976 (Public Law 94-579) FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ACT of 1976
Reverses the 1959 legislation to allow "In administering this act . . . the use of helicopters, or for the purpose of transporting captured animals, motor vehicles."

1978 (Public Law 95-514) RANGE LANDS IMPROVEMENT ACT of 1978
Most significant changes effected by this act are as follows:

A limit was set of four animals per adopter per year except by written permission of the Secretary of Interior.

Old, lame and sick animals may be destroyed in a humane manner.

Animals for which no adopters can be found may be destroyed in a humane manner.

Adopters may request full ownership title for their animal to be transferred to them after one year of successful adoption.

No wild free roaming horse or burro or its remains may be sold or transferred for the purpose of processing into commercial products.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
800 Truxtun Avenue, Room 311
Bakersfield, California 93301

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ADOPT-A-BURRO!

For adoption applications call or write

Bakersfield District Office of:

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ATTN: PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
800 TRUXTUN AVENUE, ROOM 311
BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA 93301

PHONE: (805) 861-4191

JACKS MAKE GOOD PETS, TOO!

Many people who want to adopt a burro are missing a good thing by not asking for a jack, according to Lavern Young, burro specialist for the U. S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Most requests to adopt a burro, received at the BLM's Bakersfield Office, are for jennies (females) and foals. At the same time, the majority of the burros being gathered in a herd reduction effort in the Saline Valley are *jacks*.

Many people think jacks are less desirable because of the myth that they are cantankerous, balky and generally unpleasant to be around.

"And it is a myth," Lavern said. "Jacks are just as easygoing as jennies, and if gelded, they are actually easier to domesticate. The foals have to be fed for one or two years before they are mature enough for training and work. The jacks can be put out to work right away. They can be used as pack animals in support of backpacking or other outings. They are good for junior's riding and they can pull carts. In some places in the east, they are used for weed control. Ungelded jacks can be used for mule breeding."

Prospective adopters can have the males gelded before picking them up for about $50. Interested persons can call (805) 861-4191, or write to:

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

ATTN: LAVERN YOUNG

800 TRUXTUN AVENUE, ROOM 311

BAKERSFIELD, CA 93301

BAKERSFIELD DISTRICT
YEAR END REPORT
1978

Bakersfield District ANNUAL REPORT BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

BENTON/OWENS VALLEY

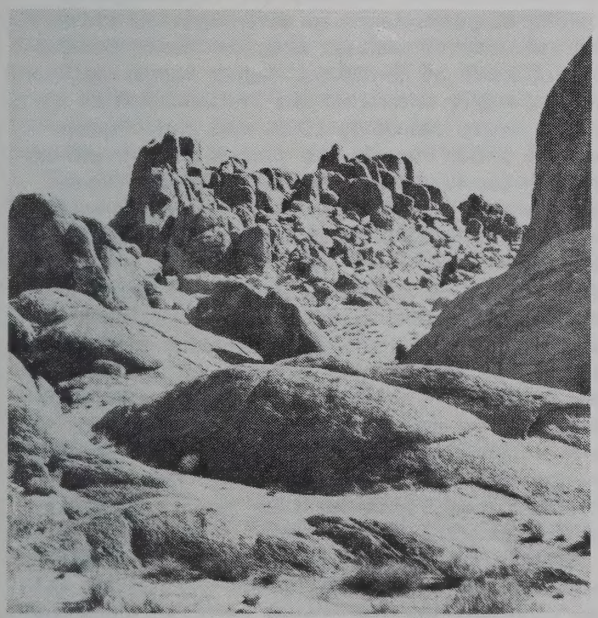
The 1981 schedule for the completion of the Benton/Owens Valley grazing environmental statement (ES), and subsequent management framework plan (MFP) and unit resource analysis, is proceeding according to predicted time frames.

The MFP revision came about as a result of the December, 1974, lawsuit by the National Resource Defense Council (NRDC) which stated that BLM " . . . violated section 102(2) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), with respect to issuance or renewal of permits for the grazing of livestock on public lands administered by BLM."

In compliance with that judgment, BLM negotiated an agreement with the NRDC which sets forth a schedule and delineation of areas for preparation of the required environmental statements. The 1981 completion date for the Benton/Owens Valley work came about as a result of that agreement.

It might well be noted that the NRDC agreement extends to include the other planning units within the District. The timetable for completion of those units is: Bodie/Coleville - Bishop Resource Area - 1981; South Sierra Foothills - Kern River and Kaweah Planning Units of the Caliente Resource Area - 1983; and the Coast/Valley planning areas - Caliente Resource Area - 1984.

The Benton/Owens Valley Planning Units ES and MFP work consists of an inventory update as mandated by the NRDC suit. A "first generation" MFP was completed in 1975; however, information contained in that MFP was determined to be insufficient in light of the ES requirement of the NRDC lawsuit. At year's end the resource inventory stacks up like this:



BLM's Alabama Hills Recreation Area, west of Lone Pine, California. This unique geological phenomena has been deemed worthy of special management consideration.

Range

Inventory is 98% completed in the Owens Valley planning unit. This information is combined with that of soils for use in the Site Ecological Method (SEM) to determine the availability of vegetative and soils values.

This newer system of resource investigation has been deemed of more value that the old Site Inventory Method (SIM) which looked at soil, vegetation, and wildlife, without an interrelationship between them. The SEM will provide consistency of inventorying between BLM and other land and resource agencies.

Continued on Page 11 . . .

Any member of the public may have their name put on the district mailing list so that they will receive any and all information on the work being done in the planning units. Simply send name and address to: U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 800 Truxtun Avenue - Room 311, Bakersfield, California, 93301.

A MESSAGE FROM THE BAKERSFIELD DISTRICT MANAGER

The Bakersfield District Bureau of Land Management is the principle land management agency for nearly a third of California's public lands. The 5½ million acres of public lands within the District contain almost every land use imaginable: skiing, hiking, camping, fishing, off-road vehicle enjoyment, grazing, wildlife, oil and gas, minerals, geothermal energy, timber, and watershed. This report is a compilation of the resource activity the District engaged in during the past year. I hope that if you have any questions concerning activities on the public lands within the District, you will write us. Our address is: Bureau of Land Management, Bakersfield District Office, 800 Truxtun Avenue - Room 311, Bakersfield, California, 93301. We would enjoy hearing from you.

Louis A Boll

WILDERNESS

The California Desert Conservation Area Wilderness Review started in the District in May of last year. Public meetings were held in Bakersfield, Los Angeles, Lone Pine, and Bishop. The meetings were held in two parts: the first day was devoted to an explanation of the wilderness program, as mandated by the Wilderness Act of 1964, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). Question and answer time was also allotted during this first day. The second day at each meeting site was devoted to allowing the public ample time to offer input into specific areas that they felt either did or did not have the characteristics of wilderness as stated in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964. These were informal "drop-in" sessions.

Following that round of May meetings, the mountains of information received was studied by the Desert Planning Staff and the results of the study were formulated into an interim map of wilderness with accompanying narrative for each area of study.

Again, public meetings were held throughout the District in August for the public to examine the updated maps and narratives, and to offer comment on them. A 30 day additional review and comment period was established in order to receive this valuable comment.

Then, in December, the final go-around of public meetings was conducted in the District, with meetings held in Los Angeles, Trona, and Lone Pine. From these meetings a final desert wilderness inventory map and accompanying narratives will be published. The public comment period for this phase will extend until February 28, 1979.

The final document will incorporate all pertinent and applicable comments received on the draft map and narratives. It will propose specific areas for further investigation by the BLM Desert Planning Staff in order to begin the study phase on identified Wilderness Study Areas. They will select proposed recommendations as to the area's suitability or non-suitability for wilderness designation by the U.S. Congress.

The Wilderness Program for the desert is broken down into three phases: Inventory, with a completion date of February 28, 1979, involves looking at public lands to determine and locate the existence of roadless areas containing 5000 acres or more of contiguous federal lands which meet the 2(c) criteria of the Wilderness Act; Study, begins March 1, 1979, and ends September 30, 1980, involves the process of determining through careful analysis, which wilderness study areas will be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation by Congress—these determinations will consider all values, resources, and uses of the public lands; Reporting, begins October 10, 1980, consists of actually forwarding, or reporting, these suitable and non-suitable recommendations through the Secretary of Interior and the President . . . to Congress. The recommendations will be accompanied by mineral surveys, environmental statements and other data required by the law. Within two years after receipt, the President must report his final recommendations to the Congress.

It must be noted that throughout the entire wilderness process to date public involvement at the meetings and the quality of public input to staff was, according to Louis A. Boll, District Manager, "Of the highest possible caliber and exemplary of what an informed public can offer to BLM planning."

Desert Tortoise Natural Area

In 1972, the need for establishing a natural area for tortoises in the Mojave Desert started gaining support from the general public and special interest groups—wildlife biologists in the academic community and government agencies, conservation organizations, and members of turtle and tortoise clubs.

The BLM took its initial protective action in 1972 when they set aside an area of 20,000 acres in Eastern Kern County to protect the signigicant wildlife and habitat values. The site is located in the Western Rand Mountains, north of California City, and lies southeast of the Rand Off-Road Vehicle Open Area. The goal of the management plan is to maintain a natural density and diversity of flora and fauna and is achieved by habitat protection, maintenance and, in some places, rehabilitation. Up until that time, the area had been a prime recreation spot for off-road vehicle users, and the tortoise population was being dramatically reduced.

In November, 1973, approximately 12,000 acres of public land in the Desert Tortoise Natural Area (DTNA) was closed to off-road vehicle use. The authority came from Executive Order 11644, concerning the use of off-road vehicles on public land. In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act's (FLPMA) requirements for areas over 5000 acres, a notice for withdrawal was published in the FEDERAL REGISTER; there was no significant opposition. Livestock use was also restricted.

The protection of the natural area benefits other species of wildlife as well as the tortoises. A high density of Mojave ground squirrels are there, an animal designated "rare" by the California Department of Fish and Game. Other protected species in the area include the prairie falcon, the burrowing owl, and the desert kit fox.

The Desert Tortoise Natural Area has the highest known density of tortoises per square mile in the world. While the normal ratio is 5-20 animals per square mile, the DTNA has an average of 200 tortoises per square mile and 1000 to 1500 tortoise have been counted in a single square mile! The Mojave Desert is the perfect environment for survival of the tortoise. The diverse plant community, primarily creosote scrub, contains 160 species of plants; 104 of these are annual species which the tortoise thrives on.

The best time to see the tortoises is in the spring, from March to May, when the area is a spectacular show of wildflowers. It is the longest active season of the tortoise. Seven to nine months of the year, the tortoises remain underground in their burrows, protected from the extreme temperatures and the inadequate supply of food. Their ability to exist in hard times is partially due to the dual purpose of the urine in their body. The waste is held in suspension, enabling them to use the liquid portion as a moisture reserve for body needs.

Tortoises normally live from 50 to 70 years, but the full enjoyment of his long life span has been difficult on the Mojave Desert. Besides his natural enemies, the ever-increasing encroachment of people into the tortoise's desert domain has disrupted his way of life and adversely affected his habitat.

As plans were made for management of the area, the BLM Bakersfield District set aside $135,000 in 1976 for protection of the area. A group of concerned citizens formed a volunteer Desert Tortoise Committee "to support the establishment of the DTNA." They raised more than $43,000 by selling ceramic tortoise pins and necklaces, and a t-shirt depicting a tortoise saying, "I may be slow . . . but I get there." A memo of understanding was written to best coordinate the efforts of BLM and the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee to protect the area and also provide an enjoyable wildlife experience for public land users.

In 1977, an additional $45,000 plus many man-months of BLM labor was assigned to the area to supplement the original funding. In BLM's Ridgecrest Area Office, a wildlife biologist was hired to help with providing visitor information and implement the habitat management plan developed by the Bakersfield District.

As typical in much of the desert, private ownership and public land form a checkerboard pattern within the DTNA's boundaries. Private land acquisitions are ongoing projects and are negotiated by both the BLM and the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee. The Nature Conservancy has also been instrumental in acquiring private land.

Exchange agreements were negotiated with the community's ranchers and plans made to fence the entire preserve. This project was completed in July, 1978, with the exception of two one-mile gaps on the west side where private holdings are on both sides of the boundary. (The BLM is now in the process of obtaining fence easement there.) When the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) crews completed the northern extension of the DTNA, they also placed "Natural Area" signs at 1/16 mile intervals. The three foot high fence, costing $55,000, allows movements of tortoises and other wildlife through it by the 10" high opening running along its bottom. It restricts entry of vehicles and livestock. The fence has repeated incidents of deliberate damage and vandalism since construction began. BLM rangers patrol the area to check any destructive activities and provide information to the tourists visiting the area.

Of extreme importance to the future protection of the habitat of the area is the pending withdrawal of the land from mineral entry. A request has been made to the BLM's Washington Office for approval by the Secretary of the Interior, Frank Gregg, and Congress.

The desert tortoise is California's State Reptile and is sometimes called a "living fossil" since he has changed very little from his ancestors, who existed even before the dinasour age. As he has been on this earth for over 200 million years, it would be a tragedy to allow his numbers to dwingle and fade away into just a memory.

Recreation is a major resource of public lands. This is the Bakersfield District campground at Crowley Lake.

District RECREATION

Recreational activities in the Bakersfield District are diverse—from hang gliding to white water rafting, with locations ranging from wide open desert spaces to tree-lined mountain creeks.

In the Ridgecrest Area of the Bakersfield District, the Rand Open Area received its usual high usage rate during 1978. Organized motorcycle races involved thousands of riders during the year. Many competitive events were also given during the year in the Spangler/Rademacher area. In general, at least two events occurred each month with an increased amount during the spring.

Jawbone Canyon and Dove Springs are the sites of much unorganized riding in the Ridgecrest Area of the Bakersfield District. Competitive events are not authorized there due to the immediately adjacent private land. Map boxes throughout the area contain an updated brochure explaining the open, restricted, and closed areas for ORV's.

The El Paso Mountains is also a part of the Ridgecrest Area that attracts recreationists. Four wheelers find it a good place to stretch their legs. Rockhounding is also a popular pursuit there. Black Mountain in the El Pasos is closed to any motorized vehicle use.

The five campgrounds—Symmes, Tuttle, Horton, and Goodale Creeks and Crowley Lake—received typical use during 1978. Visitor occupancy is heavy during the fall and on the three day weekends throughout the year. Fishing and hunting are the major activities of these BLM campground users though wildflower viewing is an attraction in the spring. The opening of trout fishing season always makes for a packed house at Crowley Lake.

The Alabama Hills, adjacent to Tuttle Creek Campground, is a popular stopover to bring back memories of the Lone Ranger and Hopalong Cassidy since it is the locale for these as well as other popular movie favorites. The hills were occupied on Memorial Day last year by the third annual horse endurance race. The Eastern Sierra Arabian Horse Association used Tuttle Creek Campground as its base for this event.

Hang gliding is another popular pastime for people who recreate in the Bishop Area. Keeler Peak on the Inyo Mountains crest is the launching site for many such recreationists.

In other parts of the Bakersfield District, the south fork of the Kern River received activity from commercial white water rafters during the summer of 1978. Starting as a pilot cooperative project for the Sequoia National Forest/Greenhorn Ranger District and the BLM Bakersfield District, its success has made it a permanent program. Breathtaking applied not only to the beauty on the outings, but also to the close calls when going through the rapids. However, expert oarsmen made the trips no more than close! The opportunity to take these trips provided a safe diversion to the attempts at innertubing made by some individuals through the Kern River Canyon.

The BLM's Bakersfield District's recreational opportunities fill the needs of just about any enthusiast—trout fisherman, rockhound or hang glider—and can provide a picturesque setting for their enjoyment.

District MINERALS

The Bakersfield District has a variety of minerals within its confines. There has been a steady exploration for these resources during 1978.

Two limestone patent cases have been completed in the Antelope Valley. One is currently being processed for hectorite clay claims just north of Death Valley Junction.

The most actively explored areas in the Ridgecrest Area were Death Valley Junction, Tecopa, Tehachapi Mountains (desert side), and Boron.

One of the biggest "finds" this year was a zeolite deposit discovered by the Anaconda Co. on land adjacent to Death Valley National Monument. One of the most prevalent uses for this mineral is sewage treatment.

In the Bishop Area of the Bakersfield District, tungsten is mostly mined, and most of this activity is on the national forests. Talc, pumice, and sand and gravel are mined on the BLM lands.

The receipt of unpatented mining claim records was fairly steady during 1978 as the deadline of October 21, 1979, rapidly approaches. BLM's Organic Act (Federal Land Policy and Management Act—FLPMA) requires that owners of unpatented mining claims, millsites, or tunnels located prior to October 21, 1976, are required to file a record of their claims with BLM state offices within three years from that date. Any new locations of claims after that date must be filed within 90 days.

Oil & Gas PROGRAM

Caliente Resource Area of the Bakersfield District contains virtually all of the oil and gas leasing activity in the district. Kern County, one of the largest oil producers in the U.S., receives 15% of its production from federal leases.

The BLM and the Geological Survey (USGS) are jointly responsible for the immediate surface around the well. The USGS is additionally and solely responsible for down hole activities, and the BLM takes care of the remaining surface of the leased land. The BLM determines whether a parcel should lease. The USGS oversees the operations at the well head; the BLM monitors the environmental impact of these operations.

Before a lease of any kind is offered, a preleasing environmental analysis is conducted by the district's oil and gas team. This team has six members of varying disciplines: archaeology, wildlife, ecology, geology, soils conservation, and outdoor recreation. An environmental assessment (EA) check list is utilized to estimate the potential impacts of the lesee's exploration, development, production, and abandonment of the area.

The team jointly rates how these processes will affect the air, land, water, plants, animals, ecological processes, landscape characteristics, and sociocultural interests of the area. The impacts are measured with a negative low, medium, or high; a zero; or a positive low, medium or high. When one thinks of assessments, he might think they are all "no-no's." However, the lesee's use of the area can have a positive effect. For example, it can increase employment or contribute to scientific development.

Besides the check list, narrative stipulations are developed from the EA. These are the most crucial part of the BLM's input, because the team can provide for specific areas which need protection.

The completed environmental assessment—check list and stipulations—is submitted to the land office in Sacramento, recommending either approval or disapproval. The great majority of leases are recommended to be approved. The most common reasons for disapproval would be: the serious disturbance of an important historical or archaeological site, the encroachment on the habitat of an endangered species, the detriment to the aesthetics of a recreation site. Other reasons could be: a major threat to a critical watershed, a complete lack of drilling sites due to the topography, or the strong objection to leasing from other agencies, groups, or individuals. In most cases, these problems can be alleviated in the stipulations.

The entire process—the party's submittal, the BLM's environmental assessment, and the USGS approval of stipulations—takes about two months. The lease lasts ten years, and the fee is $1/acre for each year.

After acquiring a right to the oil and gas under the parcel's surface, the lesee may apply to the USGS for drilling sites. the USGS receives a surface use plan along with the Application for Permit to Drill and submits these to the BLM. At this time the oil and gas team do another site specific environmental assessment of the area and may provide stipulations which the lesee must comply with to obtain approval of his drilling site. While the first of BLM's recommendations are not necessarily used in order to lease the land, their stipulations on drilling permits must be followed if the lesee wants to develop.

Periodic inspections of the parcel are done by the BLM's oil and gas team. When a new development on the parcel will create a surface disturbance, they are back on the scene to check the impacts it will have on the area. Common surface disturbances are the building of pipelines or a steam generator. The specialists make stipulations to alleviate any disturbances to the environment the new developments may cause.

The oil and gas team examined and reported on 115 lease parcels during 1978. Oil companies filed for 193 wells to be drilled, and 171 of them were processed and approved. The remaining 22 applications needed consultation about the Rare and Endangered Species Act's requirements before approval could be granted.

Approval was also given by the oil and gas team to 34 well abandonments and 19 surface disturbing operations. During 1978, they made 82 compliance checks on oil and gas leases to assure that the lesee was conforming with the stipulations for those particular sites.

A very real threat to western rangeland: the feral burro.

BURRO REDUCTION PROGRAM

There are multitudes of wild, feral burros living on rangeland managed by the Bakersfield District. Their impact must be balanced with a wide range of resources and uses, including recreation, wilderness, mining, grazing, cultural resources, wildlife, and watershed.

In 1971, Congress passed the Wild, Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act to protect these animals from reported harassment and abuse. They have since multiplied until they threaten to destroy, by degradation, the very land that supports them. They have degraded forage and wildlife habitat, and increased erosion, jeopardizing the economic stability of livestock operators and the communities dependent on livestock operations.

The BLM Burro Reduction program originated to control herd numbers to a more reasonable size. Under the direction of Wild Horse and Burro Specialist, the Bakersfield District began capturing animals by water entrapment in the spring of 1977. The burros were captured at Waucoba Springs, in the Saline Valley and then transported to holding facilities in Bishop, California. The Adopt-A-Burro Program was based there, in the BLM Bishop Area Office. From May, 1977, to May, 1978, the District removed approximately 140 excess feral burros from public lands in the Saline Valley. All but one of these animals were adopted. In May, 1978, the program funds were exhausted and trapping came to a halt.

The District Public Affairs Office continued to promote the adoption program and accepted applications for the time when fiscal year '79 funds would make it possible to begin trapping again because of help originating from the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) Program.

The Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 was passed, effecting some changes in the program regulations. It provides, upon request, for full ownership of adopted animals to be transferred to the individual adopters if he has ". . . provided humane conditions, treatment and care for such animal or animals for a period of one year."

The bill also permits those excess wild, free-roaming horses and burros for which no qualified adopter can be found, ". . . to be destroyed in the most humane manner possible." However, the "Adopt-A-Burro" Program has been so successful, this alternative is not being considered in the District.

Fiscal year '79 brought funds to begin a new year for the Burro Program. The program was shifted to the Bakersfield District from the Bishop Area Office.

In the last three months of 1978 (October 1 to January 1), program personnel again began to capture burros in the Saline Valley using water entrapment. A total of 53 burros have been captured and 37 have been adopted to individuals.

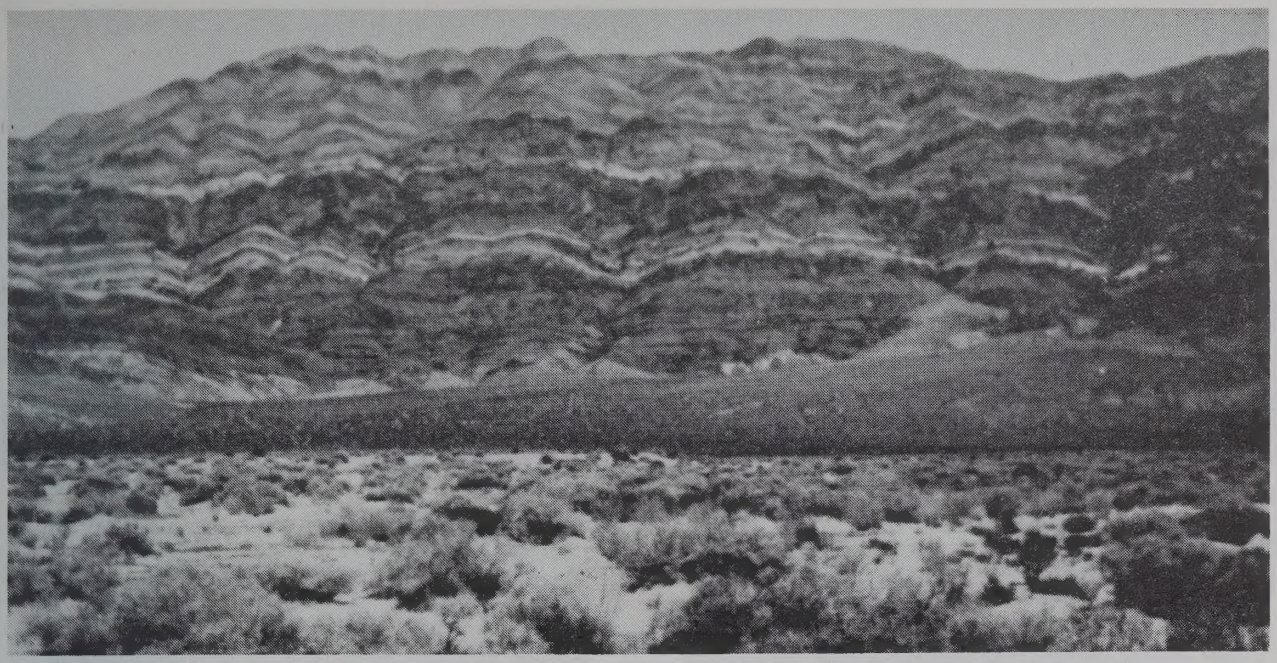
The District plans to expand its trapping areas in 1979. The first new area of trapping sites will be in the foothills of the Argus Mountains on the west side of the Panamint Valley. There have been several incidents involving burros on Highway 178 near there. Trapping in that area will hopefully reduce the number of burros in the area, decreasing the traffic hazard on the highway.

Burros are not a native wildlife species to western ranges. They were first introduced to this continent by the Spaniards in the early 1500's.

Ponce De Leon brought a small band of the sturdy animals to pack supplies for his exploration into the humid wilds of Florida in search of the mythical fountain of youth. Later, Spain became interested in the northwestern part of North America and the burro carried missionaries with their message of Christianity to the Indians.

In the 1800's, the westward movement of the new United States began, and gold prospectors brought burros by the tens of thousands with them to pack supplies and equipment. Some of these animals escaped or were released into the wild. These loose burros formed the nucleus of the herds that are present today. That high and dry country in the northeast part of the Bakersfield District is perfectly suitable to them.

Wild burro capture and adoption efforts will be ongoing through the year as long as funds are available. For information on the adoption process contact the Bureau of Land Management's Bakersfield District Office, 800 Truxtun Avenue - Room 311, Bakersfield, California, 93301.



A look at the vast expanse of public lands the rangers are responsible for patrolling.

RANGERS

The Bureau of Land Management's rangers have undergone a metamorphosis during 1978, evolving from national resource managers who patrolled the desert to full-fledged law enforcers, creating a double profession that can provide a more comprehensive protection of the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The initial authorization limited BLM ranger enforcement to the desert.

In April a special swearing-in ceremony for the rangers was attended by BLM dignitaries in Riverside, California. The BLM Riverside District rangers officially received their authority, along with the Bakersfield District's rangers, who work out of the Ridgecrest Office. The northern portion of the CDCA is their bailiwick, including Antelope, Panamint, Saline, and Eureka Valleys.

The Secretary of the Interior, Cecil Andrus, approved a proposal last September that would extend the rangers' enforcement authority beyond the boundaries of the CDCA. The BLM Bakersfield District rangers now patrol Owens Valley (Inyo County), Chimney Peak and Kelso Valley (Kern County), and Mono Basin and Round Valley (Mono County). This expansion of patrol areas was in response to problems encountered by the rangers outside the CDCA. It was confusing to the public that the rangers lacked authority in certain areas.

Campground offenses, off-road vehicle closures, damage to cultural resource sites, and illegal wood cutting will be the main offenses encountered by the rangers in these new patrol sectors.

The ranger's primary tool is patrol. Most of his public contact is in visitor assistance rather than "policing." Rangers assist with vehicle problems, orient lost recreationists, educate, and interpret. On a more limited basis, rangers assist search and rescue missions and fire control.

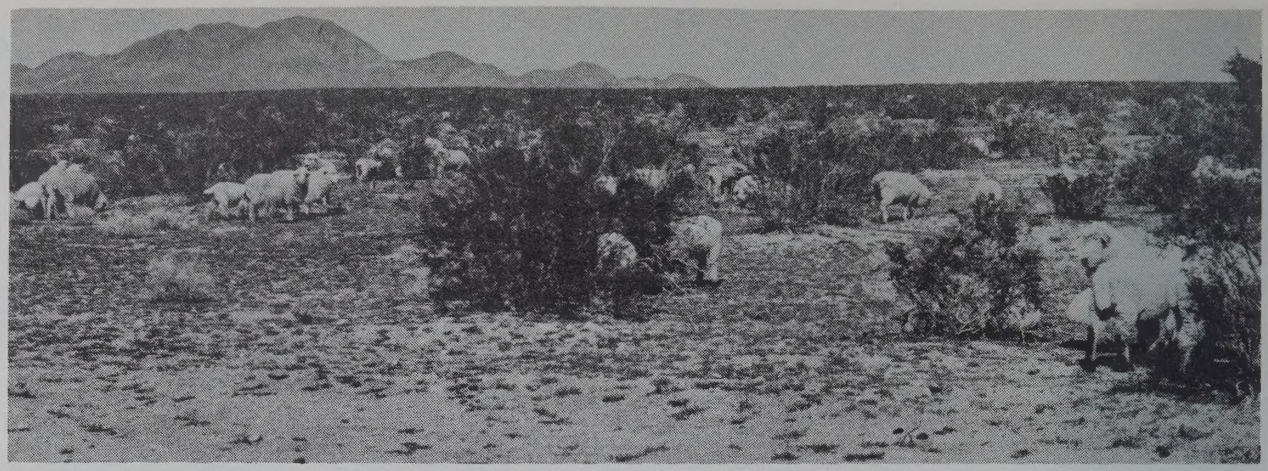
Most of the misuse occurring in the desert is from ignorance of the law and can be easily remedied by education through initial ranger contact. A small number of offenders maliciously break the law to vandalize, steal, and be otherwise destructive to resources on public lands. In these cases, the rangers have the authority to take more stringent action.

Cooperation is an integral part of the BLM ranger work, from rounding up cattle on Highway 14 with the California Highway Patrol to assisting the county sheriffs on search and rescue missions.

Currently, the BLM is negotiating with the appropriate county sheriff's offices to acquire state deputization, giving them citation authority for state laws. Most of these laws correspond to federal offenses which the rangers encounter. In other cooperative agreements, the BLM Bakersfield District rangers can use the Mono And Inyo Counties Cheriffs' radio frequencies and are negotiating a direct radio link-up with Kern County, meaning that the rangers' radio traffic could be monitored on a 24 hour basis.

The BLM rangers have received an excellent educational foundation in law enforcement. They went to eight weeks of training at the Federal Law Enforcement Center in Georgia. Many of the BLM'ers were at the top of their class after completing courses in such areas as criminal science, forensics, and constitutional law. They have additionally fulfilled two 40 hour courses on BLM policies and 40 hours of training in firearms. The latter must be repeated every year.

The BLM law enforcement ranger program receives its authority from the following: Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, Sikes Act, Land and Water Conservation Act, National Trails System Act, Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971, and Sections of Title 18 of the U.S. Code.



Grazing is the oldest use of the public lands.

RANGE

The Public Range Improvements Act of 1978 was published in the FEDERAL REGISTER on July 5, 1978, and became effective 30 days from that date. It was a landmark legislation for the restoration and management of public rangelands, the first significant revision of the grazing code since the regulations were written to implement the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934. The proposed rulemakings were published in July, 1976, and again in July, 1977. The final regulations published in 1978 reflect the suggestions of an interested public in response to the earlier proposed rules and the modifications necessary to comply with the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).

One of the major points in the new regulations is the ten year terms for grazing permittees and lesees (exceptions are on a case-by-case basis as mandated in FLPMA). The long term leases will provide the livestock operator a degree of stability in his grazing privilege. Where there are no changes in range conditions or other land uses which require adjustments, the operator is also more assured of the number of livestock he can reasonably expect to graze.

The Public Range Improvements Act provides means to assure protection for soil, water, wildlife, and other public land resources. This, in combination with an effective range improvement program, will better both the rangelands and the economic stability of the livestock operators. In keeping with FLPMA's assurance that grazing will continue to be one of the multiple uses on federal land, the new regulations provide that livestock operators who have preferences for forage directed for livestock use within their allotments will be able to keep them.

When the authorized grazing exceeds the amount of forage available within an allotment, the regulations now provide for a temporary suspention of permits and leases, instead of cancellations.

In order to avoid damage to environmentally sensitive areas or archaeological and historic sites, the Bureau retains the authority to indicate the location of salting stations on public lands and must approve supplemental feeding or the installation of improvements. The BLM must consider these resource uses and environmental values when authorizing grazing use of the public lands and in the development, construction, and maintenance of range improvements needed for grazing management. Also, to assure that unauthorized grazing does not adversely affect other values, the revised regulations strengthen the trespass penalites.

The Public Range Improvements Act also provided that grazing use within and outside of grazing districts set up by the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 will be treated identically instead of the present double sets of regulations. In additions, range betterment funds will be used to improve fish and wildlife habitat and watershed protection as well as forage conditions and livestock production.

Livestock operators in the Bakersfield District have voted for a Grazing Advisory Board. The Ballots were tabulated November, 1978, and two representatives were elected from each BLM Bakersfield District Resource Area as well as one person to represent the district-at-large. The board will meet early in 1979 and will offer advice and recommendations to the District Manager concerning management of grazing allotments and the use of range betterment funds. The members are: Phil Rudnick, Bakersfield; Carver Bowen, Glenville, Kenneth Mebane, Shafter; Ray Eyherabide, Bakersfield; Phil Etcheverry, Bakersfield; Albert Alexis, Big Pine Area; and Ronald Kemp, Lone Pine.

Public lands in the Bakersfield District provide forage for about 14,280 cattle; 47,734 sheep belong to 172 licensees and permitees. Roughly 2,743,426 acres of public land in the District is used for grazing and provides 140,700 animal unit months for this resource. In California, public lands provided forage for about 110,000 cattle and 190,000 sheep belonging to some 900 licensees and permittees. About 10 million acres of public land administered by BLM in California is suitable for grazing. Besides domestic livestock, public lands in the state also provided forage for approximately 4500 wild horses, 6000 wild burros, and 50,000 big game animals.

The Bakersfield District is responsible for 80 miles of Pacific Crest Trail.

PACIFIC CREST TRAIL

The Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) is a joint project of the National Park Service (Department of the Interior), the Forest Service (Department of Agriculture), and the Bureau of Land Management. When completed the path will be 2500 miles of continuous trail through California, Oregon, and Washington. Covering a variety of terrain and climatic conditions, the PCT can take the hiker enthusiast from near sea level elevation to 13,200 feet. The trail traverses near 109 mountains, most notably Mt. Whitney, the highest peak in the continental United States.

Designed to be built along the crest of the mountain ranges in the west coast states, the idea for a PCT was first conceived by a Californian named Clinton C. Clarke. Backpacking groups explored the proposed route in the latter part of the thirties.

Portions of the trail were developed independently, including the Cascade Crest Trail in Washington and the John Muir Trail in the California Sierra Nevadas. The fragmented Pacific Crest Trail was designated as a National Scenic Trail with the passage of the National Trails System Act in 1968. The Act also provided for the completion of the trail.

The approximately 80 miles of trail that is the Bakersfield District's responsibility is divided into three sections: Cache Peak, 25 miles from the Piute Mountains to State Highway 58; Dove Springs, 18 miles from the Scodie Mountains to the Piute Mountains; and Owens Peak, 32 miles from Rockhouse Basin to State Highway 178. When the route reaches another federal agency's land, they take over the building and maintenance of the PCT.

Roughly 30 miles of an estimated 80 miles of the PCT in the Bakersfield District have been constructed. The following progress has been made on the Owens Peak Section: the 3.5 mile Walker Pass Segment was constructed by the California Ecology Corps at a cost of $25,000 and the Southern Bear Mountain Segment of 8.4 miles was constructed at a cost of $36,000 by the Cal-Ida Construction Company. The Lamont Meadows/Morris Peak and the northern Bear Mountain Segments construction contracts have been awarded, and they should be built by the summer of 1979. The Spanish Needles Segment's survey and design will be completed by spring. It is not scheduled for construction during 1979. The Dove Springs Section of 18 miles was completed by a Title X Emergency Jobs and Unemployment Assistance Act Crew for $70,500.

The surveyors of the PCT have specific guidelines in mind to fulfill the goal of an enjoyable experience for hikers and equestrians. (Motorized equipment is not allowed on the trail.) The construction of the trail blends in with the terrain so that the natural topography and vegetation are enhanced rather than exploited. The hiker should feel that he is above the land mass in order to witness all the available panoramic views. Thus, the trail is designed to expose the most rewarding and diverse areas.

The Bakersfield District's portion of the PCT provides the recreationist with a variety of hiking experiences. The Dove Springs Section is in the high desert and is typical of most areas of the Mojave Desert—Joshua tree woodland, with many diverse reptiles. The Owens Peak Section is striking, with the southern Sierra Nevada terrain sprawling across the horizon and the other side displaying an expansive vista of the Mojave Desert. With sufficient winter rains, an impressive array of wildflowers show their colors in late spring and early summer.

The PCT is subjected to changeable and often harsh weather conditions. Branches and brush may obstruct the path, and the quality of the packed earth of the route is eroded by snow and winds. To return the PCT to its peak condition for recreationists, the Bakersfield District utilizes crews hired under the Comprehensive Education and Training Act (CETA). Working out of Lake Isabella, the crew has stabilized erosion and removed windfall and debris. They have also posted identification signs for the trail at road crossings.

A trailhead is in the planning stages for the Bakersfield District's PCT, to be located one mile west of Walker Pass Summit, right off Highway 178. It will be built under a cooperative agreement between the District and the U. S. Forest Service. The Forest Service will complete survey and design while the BLM will have responsibility for the environmental analysis, contract preparation, and construction. The facilities will include a parking area, horse corrals with unloading ramps, sanitary facilities, water pump, and ten campsites. The trailhead is intended as a one night stopover for PCT users and an unloading point for people who are prepared to hit the trail.

District WILDLIFE

In BLM's Caliente Resource Area, located in the Carrizo Plains, lies Soda Lake a 3000 acre natural lake listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a unique ecosystem. It is the site of many migrating species of birds, including whistling swans, lesser Canadian geese, long-billed curlews, and numerous sand hill cranes. This is only one example of the rich diversity of wildlife habitat that supports a multitude of wildlife species found in the Bakersfield District. Some of the habitats, such as Soda Lake, are associated with a desert environment. However, there are many less arid habitats in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and the California coastal ranges.

Eleven federal and state listed rare or endangered species inhabit public lands in the District, either permanently or on a seasonal basis. They are the California condor, San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, Tehachapi slender salamander, peregrine falcon, California bighorn sheep, Owens Valley pupfish, black toad, wolverine, Inyo slender salamander, and Mojave ground squirrel.

The Ridgecrest Area wildlife biologists are involved in work for habitat management plans (HMP's) for Koehn Lake, Jawbone Canyon, and Walker Canyons; plus the update of the HMP for the Desert Tortoise Natural Area. The desert tortoise will be inventoried this spring, which is the most active season for the reptiles.

Other projects worked on in the past year and ongoing into 1979 include: habitat improvement for sage grouse, antelope, deer and tule elk in the Bishop Area and for quail and chuckar in Caliente Area's Temblor wildlife cooperative; environmental assessment reports (EAR's) for mineral leases in the Ridgecrest Area; a major EAR for the wildlife portion for the sustained yield unit along the western side of the Sierra Nevada range; supervision of the EAR in the Coso Geothermal Area; the wildlife portions of Lands EAR's in all areas of the District; and preparation work for the Southern Sierra Grazing environmental statement. The District wildlife projects and programs are as numerous and diverse as the wildlife found within its boundaries.

The Bakersfield District hired a wildlife biologists to fill that vacancy during 1978. He is reviewing the area office submissions, planning, writing contracts, and attempting to develop the programs and budget for the District wildlife resource projects.

COSO GEOTHERMAL

Rockwell International, Newbury Park, California, has been contracted by the Bakersfield District to write up the Environmental Statement (ES) to open the doors of the Coso Area, near Little Lake, California, for future development and production of geothermal energy. The contract was awarded in September, 1978, after Rockwell successfully entered a bid of $677,661.

Contract requirements call for Rockwell to collect data and analyze the impacts of potential geothermal development on the air quality, geology, soils, hydrology, vegetation, wildlife, cultural resources, socio-economics and land use of the area. The preliminary draft ES is scheduled to be submitted to the BLM in September of this year and the final draft ES will be published and distributed in late February, 1980.

Two public meetings were held in November in Ridgecrest and Lone Pine, California, to explain the work being done on the ES and the future potential of geothermal development at Coso. During the two meetings the public was given the opportunity to ask questions and to offer input to the BLM program.

The Coso area is roughly 126 square miles in size. Forty-seven square miles are administered directly by the BLM's Bakersfield District. The Naval Weapons Center administers the remainder; 79 square miles are on Naval withdrawn land and 4.7 square miles are Naval-acquired lands. The BLM is the lead agency for the project (save for the 4.7 square mile parcel of acquired land).

In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, the District must coordinate land planning with other agencies—both state and federal. The District must also comply with applicable federal land statutes such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), amended Clear Air Act, the amended Clean Water Act, and the Wilderness Act.

The final ES on the Coso area will be distributed to the public in September, 1980. The first actual lease sale, if the possibility of leasing should occur, will be held in December, 1980.

. . . BENTON/OWENS VALLEY,
Continued from Page 1.

The soils inventory has 220,000 acres completed for both planning units. The crew has combined information gathered from strategically placed pits with photo interpretation to delineate soil types in mapping unit boundaries.

Minerals

Inventory work is proceeding from a wealth of available information . . . perhaps the most for any area in the Bakersfield District. A great deal of the information has been obtained and organized into a logical retrieval system.

An aerial photo study, primarily structural, is in progress. In addition to the structural analysis, other information will be catalogued on geologic rock types, alteration patterns, mine locations, and hazards (such as landslide areas, volcanic cones, faults and scarps). With this information a detailed composite map of the combined planning units is being constructed.

A preliminary review indicated the area has considerable potential for several mineral commodities including geothermal, sand, gravel, volcanic rock, gold, silver, tungsten, zeolite, and even peat! this array includes leasable, saleable, and locatable minerals.

Cultural Resources

The Bishop Resource Area Office has spent the major part of 1978 documenting cultural resource sites to add to the planning process for the Benton and Owens Valley areas. To date, 270 new sites have been recorded.

Among these new cultural resource locations, new petroglyph sites have been found. Some of these rock etchings fall into the "historical" category, dating back to 1878 to the early 1900's. Most of the new "finds" relate to Indian food gathering activities, evidences of seed grinding, pottery, tools, and obsidian flakes.

One historic site is of significant interest—a turn-of-the-century ranch operation. It appears the area was occupied by Indians as well as white people at the same time because of the glass tools found in the area. The corrals are still in use today.

A ghost town near Benton was recorded on the inventory. Montgomery City dates back to 1870 and now consists only of rock foundations.

Additionally inventoried were all the known national, state, and county landmarks in the Benton and Owens Valley planning areas.

Little has been documented on the occurence of vandalism in the Benton and Owens Valley vicinities. No formal protection plan has been launched as of yet, but the new ranger in the Bishop Office is aware of the problem areas and is incorporating them into his patrol sectors.

Wildlife

Inventories are close to completion. At year's end the inventory of terrestrial wildlife habitat—deer, elk, rodents, lizards, birds—is roughly 65% complete. The Owens Valley pupfish is the only endangered species. It is found in fish slough, ten miles north of Bishop within the Owens Valley Planning Unit. However, another species being classified is the Inyo Mountain salamander. Aquatic wildlife has been 95% inventoried.

The field data is currently being combined to determine major characteristics of the wildlife in both planning units.

Lands

Roughly 75% of the inventory data gathering was completed at the end of the year. The unauthorized and existing improvements such as roads, fences, corrals, communication sites, are being accounted for, as well as hazards, such as mine shafts or pesticide waste disposal sites. Ownership and regulatory control of every acre of land in the areas will be discerned from this inventory.

Public Input Needed

The planning process in the Benton/Owens Valley planning units has progressed over the past year, but, much more work is needed. Public input into the inventory of resource uses and resource values of the lands in the planning units will be actively sought during 1979. Special attention is being aimed at a program of public information that will, hopefully, encourage the public to invest heavily into the information bank being drawn up. After May, there will be "open house" events in the district where the public may offer information first hand. Additionally, the public may give their input via the mail.

FOSSIL FALLS

The environmental statement for Fossil Falls archaeological site was completed by year's end. The area, near Little Lake, California, is recognized on the Register of Historical Sites, and steps are continuing to preserve this valuable cultural resource for future generations of Americans.

Gates and barriers were installed across roads leading to the site in June, 1978. "Antiquities" signs were installed in late '78, showing the unique and sensitive values of this archaeological site. "Closed Area" signs are also evident in the area in order to eliminate all forms of motorized transportation into the area.

Trash in the Fossil Falls area was eliminated by a massive cleanup last year by Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) personnel. During the cleanup the grafitti, carelessly painted on the rocks in the area, were also eliminated. Maintenance crews (CETA personnel) periodically check the area to repair or cleanup any visitor degradation.

"Pot hunting" at this site has been reduced to a minimum since the road barriers and "closed" signs went up, which is a big improvement over past history there.

This year plans are underway to create a pathway of volcanic cinder to the archaeological site from the main parking lot. The path will be approximately 1/4 mile long and will make walking much easier. Also, the installation of trash facilities is planned for the parking lot. The cans will be emptied and maintained by CETA personnel and staff of the Ridgecrest Area Office.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protection our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

FIRE PROGRAM

From modest beginnings, the District fire suppression program has grown to the point where adequate protection of 5½ million acres of public lands from wildfire is a reality.

In 1973, the District had only two fire trucks and 12 firefighters. At year's end, 1978, the District fire fleet stood at 10 firefighting units and 31 personnel.

Interagency coordination, the backbone of the District fire program, at the end of the year included participation in the interagency helitack base at Bridgeport (BLM and Forest Service), and the Owens Valley Interagency Dispatch Center (BLM, Forest Service, California Division of Forestry).

The helitack base is designed for immediate response to fire situations. The concept of using helicopters to fight fire has been responsible for innovative techniques being established . . . such as using huge water buckets, carried by the helicopters, for water drops with pinpoint accuracy. The team consists of BLM and Forest Service personnel.

The dispatch center enables the utilization of a central radio dispatch center to call in the resources of many agencies, regardless of administrative boundaries, to fight fire. The value of this approach to fire suppression proved itself out during the past year.

At year's end the District hired three fulltime engine foremen and one fire prevention technician. These are new positions for the program and will add substantially to the effectiveness of the District's fire effort.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT BAKERSFIELD DISTRICT

The Bakersfield District administers almost one-third of the public lands in California. Nationally, BLM administers 460 million acres of public lands.

The district contains a diverse number of resource considerations that include range, timber, watershed, minerals, oil and gas, geothermal, fish and wildlife, lands, cultural resources and recreation. The district is mandated to the management of public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the conbination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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